ROY BHASKAR

REFLECTIONS ON METAREALITY

Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life

A PHILOSOPHY FOR THE PRESENT

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION

by Mervyn Hartwig

ROUTLEDGE

Reflections on MetaReality

Reflections on MetaReality is now widely regarded as a landmark in contemporary philosophy. It initiates the philosophy of metaReality, the third main phase of Roy Bhaskar's philosophical thoughts, after original or basic critical realism and dialectical critical realism. Originally published in 2002 and based on talks given in India, Europe and America, *Reflections on MetaReality* presents Roy Bhaskar's new philosophy of metaReality as a radical extension, systematic development and proleptic completion of critical realism.

This brilliant series of studies contains seminal and far-reaching discussions of critical realism and the nature of being; an incisive and limpid account of modernity, modernism and post-modernism; a sublime discourse on the nature of the self; and compelling considerations of the relationship between social science and self-realisation. Together, they demonstrate the ubiquity of transcendental phenomena in everyday life and the orientation of enlightenment towards collective human emancipation and universal self-realisation.

A new introduction to this edition by Mervyn Hartwig, founding editor of the *Journal of Critical Realism* and editor and major author of *A Dictionary of Critical Realism* (Routledge, 2007), describes the context, significance and impact of *Reflections on MetaReality* and supplies an expert guide to its content. This book is essential reading for students and practitioners in both philosophy and the human sciences.

Roy Bhaskar is the originator of the philosophy of critical realism and the author of many acclaimed and influential works, including *A Realist Theory of Science*; The Possibility of Naturalism, Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation; *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*; *Plato Etc.*; *From Science to Emancipation* and (with Mervyn Hartwig) *The Formation of Critical Realism*. Among his edited volumes are *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change* and *Ecophilosophy in a World of Crisis*. He was the founding chair of the Centre for Critical Realism; and is currently a World Scholar at the University of London Institute of Education.

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'The world we have created today as a result of the thinking thus far, has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them.'

—**Albert Einstein**

'We are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world, it is very young, very weak—not in its essence, but in its outer manifestation—not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never been traced out: nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, a *universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure.'

—**The Mother** (*Sage of Pondicherry*)

'Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu,
Buddhist, sufi, or zen. Not any religion

or cultural system. I am not from the East
or the West, not out of the ocean or up

from the ground, not natural or ethereal, not
composed of elements at all. I do not exist,

am not an entity in this world or the next,
did not descend from Adam and Eve or any

origin story. My place is placeless, a trace
of the traceless. Neither body or soul.

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two
worlds as one and that one call to and know,

first, last, outer, inner, only that
breath breathing human being.'

—Jelaluddin Rumi

New Introduction*

Acronyms

CM	classical modernism		discourse of modernity
CN	critical naturalism	PMR	the philosophy of metaReality
CR	critical realism	TDCR	transcendental dialectical critical realism
DCR	dialectical critical realism	T/F	bourgeois triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism
EC	explanatory critique	TR	transcendental realism
HM	high modernism		
M	the theory and practice of modernisation		
PM	postmodernism		
PDM	the philosophical		

Since the victory of capitalism over actually existing socialism towards the end of the last century, the tragifarce of Western bourgeois triumphalism and endism has played to the accompaniment of a dolorous chorus of Leftist theorists intoning that our situation as a species is

* A note on terminology: 'MetaReality' and cognate terms were originally spelt with a hyphen: 'Meta-Reality' (at the beginning of a sentence); otherwise, 'meta-Reality', including within titles and chapter headings. In future publications (with the exception of this volume) Roy Bhaskar has decided to dispense with the hyphen and to capitalize the first letter of 'metaReality' in titles and chapter headings. I have accordingly followed suit here.

dire, 'sealed and secured by the logic of capital'.[1] In marked contrast to this resonating refrain in the register of despair, Roy Bhaskar has taken the direfulness of our situation largely as established,[2] holding that its fundamental causes are the deep structures of the capitalist mode of production and the five-fold alienation on which they rest – a system which, as the most sophisticated form of master–slavery yet to appear on the stage of geo-history, whose reach is now for the first time truly global, not coincidentally 'systematically promotes gross sins, whether personal sins such as greed and avarice, or social sins such as the exploitation of your fellow human beings and insensitivity to their suffering';[3] and has devoted his creative energies to locating and demonstrating a way out of our predicament, and to showing that twenty-first century humanity possesses the resources necessary to take it. The fundamental impetus of *Reflections on MetaReality: Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life*, as of Bhaskar's philosophy generally, is the transcendence and healing of division and split in a reconciliation that sees an end to the blind domination of nature and humans by humans. Its fundamental message is that, if the species is to have a future, let alone a flourishing one, it is imperative that we get back into tune with nature, whence we emerged and from which we have become estranged, including our own essential human nature.[4] We arrive at the eudaimonistic society by shedding or absenting heteronomous orders of determination and becoming who we already essentially are. This is the nub of spirituality as thematised explicitly in the philosophy of metaReality, but implicit in and presupposed by Bhaskar's earlier work: the transcendence of alienation, dualism or split in all its forms, with a consequent sense of (richly differentiated) unity, wholeness and being-at-home-in-the-world and an inexhaustible love for being and a yearning to see it unfold.[5] The philosophy of metaReality is a profound meditation on spirituality understood in this way – 'a spirituality within the bounds of secularism, consistent with all faiths and no faith' (p. 93) that is both of the world, uniting us with it at the deepest level of our being, and continuously engaged in it.

Bhaskar's philosophy has been elaborated in three main phases, each developing and deepening its predecessor:

- original or basic critical realism (CR) (transcendental realism – TR, critical naturalism – CN, and explanatory critique – EC);
- dialectical critical realism (DCR – the dialecticisation of critical realism and 'the emancipation of dialectic (for the dialectic of) emancipation'[6]) and transcendental dialectical critical realism (TDCR – the first stage of Bhaskar's spiritual turn);
- the philosophy of metaReality (PMR), which *Reflections on MetaReality* expounds for the first time.

PMR is a largely preservative sublation of CR/DCR/TDCR (henceforth 'critical realism'): it both draws out its real strengths and, without falling back into identity-thinking, goes beyond it by inverting its prioritisation of difference (non-identity) over unity and identity;[7] the earlier system remains valid as an account of the fundamental shape of relative reality (the world of non-identity and duality), but is surpassed as 'realism about transcendence leads to the self-transcendence of realism' in a conception of an infrastructural absolute reality or foundational level of being that, as a necessary condition 'for any being at all' (pp. 11, 268–9), underpins and sustains the dualistic world that critical realism addresses, in all its permutations. PMR, in short, as the title of the fourth chapter of *Reflections* puts it, develops 'in and beyond critical realism' (p. 165). The fundamental procedure of this new philosophy – and this is overlooked by critics who reject the procedure as 'metaphysical' or 'speculative' in relation to PMR but accept it for critical realism[8] – is the same as that which produced hitherto existing critical realism: transcendental critique, in which transcendental argumentation for (meta)-realist positions from geo-historically relative premises goes hand-in-hand with a twofold process of immanent critique: (1) of the philosophical discourse of modernity (PDM) in the

context of a totalising critique of Western philosophy as such; and (2) of critical realism's own prior phases.

The main phases of this process, together with the basic contours of PMR's articulation with critical realism, are displayed in Table 1. (The tables are grouped together at the end of this essay.) The chief characteristics of PDM, together with the elements of its critical realist and metaRealist critique, are set out in Table 2. These two tables make it clear that the fundamental motor of Bhaskar's philosophy has been the identification of key absences in PDM (including, in the case of the last three items on the list that follows, critical realism) – the absence, or absence of an adequate account, of: ontology, absence, internal relationality, human intentionality or transformative praxis, spirituality, enchantment, and non-duality; and their remedying in a more complete conceptual formation expressing 'the self-structuration of being'[9] or the ontological–axiological chain. Table 3 shows, in greater detail than Table 1, how the leading concepts of PMR relate to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain, and Table 4, the last in the series, and perhaps the most illuminating, indicates how they relate to the critical realist domains of reality.

The correspondences indicated in the tables are of course not always neat and, although depicted as singular, are sometimes duplex (bliss-consciousness, for example, whether considered transitively or intransitively, 'belongs' both at 2A, in that it concerns absence or emptiness, and at 3L in that it is experience of union with the (implicit) consciousness of fine structure; fine structure itself pertains equally to the domain of the real (or to 1M), as the deep structure of beings, and to the domain of the empirical/conceptual (or to 3L) in that it is implicit (ground-state) consciousness; and transcendental identification pertains to 2E in that it is in consciousness and to 3L in that it effects union, and should be thought of as sitting at the junction of 2E and 3L – see, e.g., p. 260). The tables should be regarded as an aid to understanding and a demonstration of coherent systematicity rather than as providing a rigid grid for mechanical deployment. Note that this beautifully articulated and open, self-transcending system of philosophy,

destined itself to be transcended some day, is in a sense 'completed' in PMR, as the foundational absolute level of identity-in-difference, that is, identity with a rich potential for differentiation, arrived at in 7A/Z, is seen to be presupposed by the non-identity from which the system departs at 1M.[10]

Bhaskar's spiritual turn got seriously under way in the mid-1990s, issuing first in a work that attempts to synthesise West and East, science and religion, materialism and idealism, atheism and theism (*From East to West*, published in 2000, which elaborated TDCR), and then in 2002 in PMR which, as already indicated, seeks to transcend (draw out their full strengths and surpass) such oppositions by articulating a spirituality that can appeal both to the secularly minded and the religious.[11] As part of a more general turn to religion and spirituality among the intelligentsia occurring simultaneously across the globe, which probably had similar causes,[12] it was motivated above all by a desire to find a way forward out of the multiple interrelated crises afflicting human social being at all four of its planes (our transactions with nature, interpersonal relations, social structures and stratified personalities, all of which – Bhaskar was to diagnose – are in fundamental respects out of kilter with our essential human natures); and, as part of the same undertaking, to identify and remedy conceptual absences that played an important role in the failure of the emancipatory project in the twentieth century, West and East, and to boost the cultural resources of that project. Although Bhaskar himself 'did [and does] not hold any deep or specific religious convictions',[13] and PMR issues in a sharp critique of actually existing religiosity and its institutionalised forms (a critique that is by no means restricted to fundamentalism (pp. 18, 222)), the investigative phase of the spiritual turn took him via religion and the thematisation of God in *From East to West*. This was because religion had a virtual monopoly on the topic of spirituality and it was evident that the application of the critical realist holy trinity of judgemental rationalism, epistemic relativity and ontological realism to the putative object of religious belief could open up a space

for inter-faith, intra-faith and extra-faith dialogue, promoting mutual understanding, respect and the unity and capability for collective action on a global scale that the species is so much in need of.

PMR differs from TDCR in three important respects. First, as we have seen, it seeks to transcend rather than synthesise the profane/sacred, materialism/idealism, being/meaning, fact/value and related dualisms.[14] Second, it understands spirituality as ubiquitous in, and a necessary condition of, social life, not just, as in TDCR, as a presupposition of emancipatory projects and as a religious phenomenon; and indeed it is the most sustained and systematic philosophical thematisation of the pervasive spirituality of everyday life available to us. Transcendence is normally associated with fleeting moments of identification or union in peak experiences such as prayer, meditation or communion with nature on the part of subjects deemed to be otherwise immersed in the mundacity of ordinary life, but PMR demonstrates that it is everywhere in that life, albeit hidden and largely unnoticed, and in no way, as is commonly thought, opposed to social emancipation but, on the contrary, presupposed by it (p. 116). (While TDCR does have a concept of spirituality as ubiquitous in everyday life,[15] it plays a relatively back-stage role there.) Third, PMR substitutes the secular concept of 'the cosmic envelope' for 'God'. This is no mere change of name. The cosmic envelope interconnects the ground-states of all concretely singular beings, where a ground-state just is the state that is present in all other states, 'something like an absolute zero of consciousness, or . . . the vacuum state of quantum field theory'.[16] The concept of the cosmic envelope encapsulates the view that the absolute with which human spirituality links is immanent in the cosmos and ontologically transcendent only in relation to ground-states; it does not presuppose that there is anything that is 'supernatural' in the sense of transcendent to the cosmos – this is left open: Bhaskar is agnostic here, i.e. he does not claim to know what, if anything, lies outside the cosmic envelope (p. 93). Indeed, PMR can be regarded as a giant koan designed to stretch our understanding of what is 'natural' until we see that

the very concept of the 'supernatural' commits a category mistake, splitting being into two.[17]

As already noted, and as indicated in Tables 1 and 3 in particular, the Bhaskarian system of philosophy comes full circle in PMR, as identity-in-difference at 7A/Z is seen to underlie non-identity at 1M. This is no abrupt about-face, nor is it in any way arbitrary. Non-identity is not annulled, but dialectically overreached, so that we have 'the constellational identity or unity of non-duality, e.g. at the level of our material embodiment, and duality' (p. 260). Moreover, this switch in emphasis had been explicitly entrained already in DCR, which moved 'at 1M . . . from attention to difference to the recognition of *underlying identity*' or 'identity-in-difference'.[18] Finally, notwithstanding CR's formal emphasis on non-identity, there is a sense in which it has always assigned ontological, epistemological and logical priority to universality, unity and identity: it is underlying structures and kinds that generate the phenomenal flux of the world. It depends how one approaches the matter: from an epistemological point of view that stresses the difference between the transitive and intransitive dimensions, non-identity is prior, but from an ontological perspective, epistemology is constellationally contained within being, and non-identity yields primacy to identity and unity. The shift from (α), a DCR (itself a deepening of CR) ontology of underlying fields of possibility, some of which are ultimata, ingredient in everything else and sustaining it,[19] understood as dispositionally identical with their changing causal powers and possessing a rich potential for differentiation, viewed in terms that are non-committal as to whether they are 'material' or 'ideal', implicitly conscious or not, to (β), a PMR ontology of underlying implicitly conscious fields of possibility that is likewise dynamically differentiating, ingredient and sustaining requires the merest perspectival switch. This is indeed a going beyond, but it is also a continuing and sustaining or upholding. As Bhaskar underlines, the cosmos is an open, implicitly conscious, developing, material system (p. 223). Can stones talk, as some Indigenous peoples may hold or have held?[20] Of course not. Can we come to understand the intrinsic

structure of a stone and experience bliss in so doing? Certainly, and Bhaskar's argument is that the real reason why we can do so, its alethic truth, is that the implicit supramental consciousness of the foundational level pervades, interrelates and underpins the whole of being, including other forms of consciousness, such that at the level of fundamental possibility everything is contained within everything else. This is 'generalised co-presence'. 'To be is to be related, that is really what I am saying', he tells his audience in Mumbai in December 2001 (p. 149). Put in those terms, it is no more than what he had already said (inter alia) in CR; what PMR adds above all is that being is shot through with enfolded ground-state consciousness, the experience of which for any emergent consciousness, whose diachronic evolution and synchronic functioning it makes possible, is the highest form of consciousness.

Unreconstructed coldstream materialists who have been inclined to dismiss PMR as 'off with the fairies' on the grounds that reality is at bottom brutely physical would do well to recall that Bhaskar is one of the foremost philosophical defenders of science of his generation. His wager is that, where it has not already done so, empirically grounded science will bear out his insights[21] as the old scientific worldview of reductive materialism that has been hegemonic in the West since the seventeenth century is replaced by the new emergentist outlook.[22] It is of course a grave empiricist error, often committed, to set up a simple contrast between relatively a priori philosophical claims, such as those of PMR, and those of science in terms of whether or not they are 'empirically verifiable', wrongly supposing that philosophy can establish no truths and that science itself does not incorporate assumptions that cannot be empirically tested, and overlooking that science often advances via (*inter alia*) spectacularly speculative theories. The proper relationship between philosophy and science is not one in which the former is read off from the latter, but a dialectical or dialogical one: philosophy reasons from premises that take on board some data from science, and feeds back into science; and vice versa. The same holds, in PMR, for science and theology. CR/PMR can underlabour for both.[23]

Reflections on MetaReality is the first to appear of the three books, all published in 2002, that elaborate PMR.[24] It brilliantly introduces the new philosophy in two modes: the mode of exuberant 'holistic performances' with audiences in India in 2001–2 (Chapters 1–3, which are edited versions of the transcripts)[25] and the mode of systematic written exposition in the solitude of the study (the Introduction, the Preface and the Postscript to Chapter 2, and Chapter 4 and its Postscript). One feels a great energy coursing through this book as Bhaskar, with remarkable intrepidity and assurance, populates a whole new level of ontology with carefully defined, inter-inanimating[26] concepts. The scope and creativity (and its pace) are breath-taking, comparable to the storm of creativity that effected the dialectical deepening of critical realism and a recasting of dialectic itself in Bhaskar's magisterial *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* less than a decade earlier.

The Introduction is a slightly shorter version of the 'Manifesto of MetaReality' that appears in the other two PMR texts; together with the Preface, it provides a useful synoptic view of the new philosophy. Chapter 1 considers the development of critical realism in relation to its immanent critique of PDM and shows briefly how this critique feeds powerfully into the thematisation of characteristic PMR themes (the transcendentally real self and the primacy of self-change in social change, which the Postscript to the chapter then elaborates); these topics are later rehearsed more systematically in Chapter 4. Bhaskar's critique of PDM had of course been developing since his first book (1975) but, stimulated by visits at the beginning of the new millennium to India, where modernity, modernisation and globalisation were (and are) hot topics in the academy, and by its pertinence for the reflexive contextualisation of PMR, Bhaskar here draws the threads of his ongoing critique together for the first time in a lapidary overview. *Reflections* is in my view the single best source for Bhaskar's overall critique of PDM. This is perhaps the place to add that, if spirituality is not for you, there is much else in the book that could well be, in particular the systematic recapitulation of critical realism, rich in felicitous new formulations and illumi-

nations of the genealogy and import of key concepts (thus it becomes very clear, for example, that the concept of truth as real, i.e. alethic truth, is presupposed by ideology-critique and the theories of the Tina formation and demi-reality that ideology-critique entrained – pp. 39–40). The discussion of the self at the end of Chapter 1 leads nicely into Chapter 2, which is a profound meditation on that topic, and the best place to start on it in Bhaskar's oeuvre. Chapter 3, 'Social science and self-realisation: non-duality and co-presence', rehearses for the benefit of a new audience the twin processes of the unfolding critique of PDM and the development of critical realism, before considering the motivational context of the spiritual turn (pp. 131–2) and taking up the other issues announced in the chapter's title. It provides a good popularising account of the logic whereby critical realism morphs into PMR. Chapter 4, which occupies almost a third of the book, systematically expounds the new philosophy in a more formal key. Readers who are unfamiliar with PMR but familiar with critical realism or philosophy more generally might want to start with Chapter 4 and then move on to *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, undoubtedly the magnum opus of Bhaskar's spiritual turn, before returning to the earlier chapters of the present work. While the exposition in Chapter 4 is of the full system, much of its focus is on PMR at 1M, whereas *The Philosophy of MetaReality* gives more or less equal attention to 1M-7A/Z.

Bhaskar summarises the arguments establishing the principles of PMR towards the end of *Reflections* (pp. 267–9),[27] grouping them into (1) objective considerations, (2) subjective considerations and (3) the unity of (1) and (2). On the first line, the method of transcendental critique is deployed to develop critical realism to the point where realism about transcendence leads to the self-transcendence of realism, as an absolute realm of non-duality is seen to be essential to the dualities and alienations of social life as its basis or ground and its mode of constitution, and also – and here the method is the phenomenology of experience rather than transcendental critique – its fine structure or deep interior (see the last section of Table 4).

The second line is a pragmatic approach, that is, one that presupposes the reality of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope in order to appeal to practice: in essence, it argues that if you act inconsistently with your ground-state you will will find that you are split and unhappy (unfulfilled) in some way. Try it, and see for yourself. Conversely, it is argued that when people act in a maximally effective way individually or collectively – as for example in the Egyptian revolution that is unfolding as I write – their ground-state qualities will be to the fore: will, determination and energy, creativity and freedom, unconditional love and all its circles, right-action, a feeling of coming home to one's true self, a sense that the world is enchanted, and awakening to unity and non-duality as such (see Table 3). On this line, achieving your goals in life depends ultimately on getting in touch with your real self and clearing your embodied personality of heteronomous elements that are inconsistent with it: 'we have got to get ourselves straight' (p. 101). This is a development of the position in *Dialectic* in which 'emancipation and enlightenment [including philosophical enlightenment] consist ultimately in theory-practice consistency, which is fundamentally consistency with our transcendentally real selves'.[28]

The third approach builds on critical realism's demonstration of the depth-stratification of being to argue the reality of a foundational level of non-duality as a necessary condition for any being at all. On this line we could ask, for example, where else could the eruption of pure bliss in Tahrir Square upon the fall of the Mubarak regime ultimately come from if not from the fundamental structure of possibility of the universe? To say that it is a specifically human creative power or a human construction hardly answers the question in a thoroughgoing way. Here the argument would be that the ground-state properties of human action established by (2) are in resonance with the ground-state properties of being as such, established by (1) – as the relevant correspondences noted in Table 3 suggest.

The second and third approaches are developed more fully in *The Philosophy of MetaReality*. The first is the principal[29]

method followed in *Reflections*, and can be seen most clearly at work in Chapter 4. In addition to these main lines of argument there is of course a logic of inter-implication or -entailment between the various propositions. Thus transcendental identification in consciousness entails the primacy of self-referentiality, which in turn entails and is entailed by commitment to a eudaimonistic society or universal self-realisation (pp. 14, 53, 148, 220); the collapse of subject–object duality in transcendental identification entails that reality is enchanted (p. 226); and so on. Furthermore, the intricate inter-articulation of the moments of the system, which I have tried to map in the tables, lends plausibility to the arguments overall. This has been underlined by Seo MinGyu in relation to the logic of anti-anthropism in CR/PMR. Seo brilliantly demonstrates that, only when human beings both see themselves and act as a contingently emergent part of the cosmic totality – 'anthropocosmically' – and not as in any way split off from it, is anti-anthropism carried through to a definitive conclusion; and this is the prospect that PMR holds out.[30]

Though sceptical reactions to PMR abound, there has to date been only one in-depth sceptical assessment of (some of) the arguments it actually deploys, by Jamie Morgan.[31] This pioneering, constructive appreciation and critique focuses on (1), above, raising the standard objection that human experience of the non-dual may be illusory; that is, while experience of non-duality in consciousness and agency may indeed be real and pervasive, it may not be indicative of a foundational non-dual level of being – it may be erroneous, limited, etc. and may pertain solely to the specifically human emergent level of being, as 'a basic part of the brain function of limited creatures interacting with a genuinely and, *at all levels*, external environment'.[32] Bhaskar has responded to this briefly in *The Formation of Critical Realism*, basically to the effect that Morgan needs to show 'how in that case agency is possible, or understanding or teamwork'.[33] Morgan's position disconnects or splits us off from the world from which we have emerged, presupposing that, when we experience bliss (to continue our example), it is a discrete emergent phenomenon at our level

of being that does not owe anything to the implicit affordant possibilities of the 'external environment'.[34] This is to tacitly endorse human–world dualism, which Morgan officially rejects. As Morgan otherwise acknowledges, just as we cannot step outside the geo-historical process into which we are 'thrown', so we cannot step outside that greater dynamic totality, nature, to which we belong, although we may come to be afflicted in the demi-real with the illusion that we have done so. We cannot, because it is in us and we are in it; as *Reflections* underlines, 'there is not such an absolute dichotomy between consciousness and non-consciousness and not such an absolute dichotomy between human beings and the rest of nature as we naively suppose' (p. 50). Or, as a fuller version of a quote from Albert Einstein, dating from 1954, that Morgan draws our attention to has it:

> A human being is part of a whole, called by us the universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self. We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if humanity is to survive.[35]

Put like that, it seems no more than obvious. It is the philosophy of metaReality in a nutshell, but it takes a great realist scientist to see it and articulate it clearly, and a great (meta)realist philosopher with a thorough grounding in the philosophy of science to see it with equal clarity and persuasively elaborate it.

Morgan's general approach to transcendence also seems vulnerable to immanent critique. He espouses the rationality

of science but arguably does not himself proceed in the manner in which creative science proceeds. He limits himself to the discursive intellect, as distinct from the intuitive intellect,[36] implying that we can – or should be able to – reason our way in or out of belief in non-duality (or God etc.) by means of it alone.[37] But, as Bhaskar has argued and some scientists attest,[38] there is a moment of absolute transcendence in scientific discovery that arrives, not by courtesy of the discursive intellect as such, although it will have done a great deal of indispensable preparatory work, but as a revelation, 'out of the blue', in a gap between thoughts (un-thought). Bhaskar interprets this plausibly as an anamnestic flash of transcendental identity consciousness with the supramental consciousness of the foundational level. If that is deemed to be an illusion, the onus is on the sceptic who is also a scientific realist to say how in that case such moments of revelation of truth are possible. Genealogically speaking, this is a matter of utmost importance, because it was reflection on 'this moment of non-duality . . . in any scientific revolution' that prompted the elaboration of PMR.[39] PMR, like CR, takes its departure from science. It is in no sense a philosophy of reaction; it seeks, not to return us to the worldview of our ancestors prior to the rise of Western modernity, but to articulate a spirituality that is in keeping with twenty-first century scientific rationality and the presuppositions of humanity's emancipatory projects, and as such to be 'apt for contemporary times' (p. 9).

Bhaskar's system of philosophy prior to PMR describes a two-way trajectory, from West to East in bringing Western conceptions of philosophy and science to bear on problems of modernisation and emancipation, and then from East to West in a reverse, synthesising movement in TDCR. PMR essays a final revolutionary leap 'beyond East and West'[40] (cf. pp. 131–2, 173–4) to articulate a worldview appropriate to the richly diversified planetary eudaimonistic civilisation that it seeks to promote. In it, the dialectical antagonism of the bourgeois enlightenment and its romantic reaction in Western modernity,[41] which manifests itself in philosophy as the antagonism of positivism and hermeneuticism and their

satellites, finds its definitive resolution in theory that seeks to show the way to its resolution in practice at the level of the species. The main strength it draws from Western modernity is the idea of individualism – not PDM's impoverished individualism of an atomistic egocentric subject set against the world conceived in abstractly universal terms as an object of manipulation, but the rich individualism or universal concretely singularised and free-flourishing in nature first articulated in Marx's high modernism and finding its most powerful philosophical elaboration and justification in DCR and PMR.[42] The main strength it draws from East is the idea of non-duality, but it moves beyond it in conceiving of the absolute, not as that which renders relative reality illusory, but as its ultimate ingredient and sustaining basis or ground to which we must attune ourselves in order to realise our freedom. If dialectic 'is the pulse of freedom'[43] immanent in human practice, metaReality is that same pulse grounded in the deepest dynamically unfolding and differentiating processes (spatio-temporalising structures) of nature (cf. p. 184).

Mervyn Hartwig
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Notes

1 Frederic Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic,* London: Verso, 2009, 607.
2 For an assessment by a critical realist sociologist of just how dire our situation is, see Garry Potter, *Dystopia: What Is To Be Done?* Waterloo, Ca.: CreateSpace, 2010.
3 Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism,* London: Routledge, 2010, 214.
4 'The whole point of the philosophy [of metaReality] is to re-ground the relative in the absolute, . . . re-connect and re-unite our embodied personalities with our ground-states from which, so to speak, they have cut loose' (Roy Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality, Volume I, MetaReality: Creativity, Love and Freedom,* New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, Ca. and London: Sage, 2002, 127).

5 Cf. Roy Bhaskar, 'The philosophy of metaReality, part II: agency, perfectibility, novelty' (interview by Mervyn Hartwig), *Journal of Critical Realism* 1(1) 2002, 67–108.
6 Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, London: Routledge, [1993] 2008, 40.
7 As indicated below, this inversion had been entrained already in DCR and TDCR, but it is brought very much to the fore in PMR and is the nub of its immanent critique of critical realism.
8 E.g. Ted Benton, 'Foreword' to *Critical Realism and the Social Sciences: Heterodox Elaborations*, eds J. Frauley and F. Pearce, Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 13; Gregor McLennan, '"FOR science in the social sciences": the end of the road for critical realism?', in *Nature, Social Relations and Human Needs: Essays in Honour of Ted Benton*, eds S. Moog and R. Stones, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 55.
9 Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, 117.
10 I am sometimes asked: 'What comes *after* metaReality?' In my view, only time will tell: Bhaskar has taken his system about as far as it can be taken from his position in the unfolding of being.
11 For a brief overview of these developments, see Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 146ff.; Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, 'Beyond East and West', in *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, eds M. Hartwig and J. Morgan, London: Routledge, 2011, Ch. 8.
12 For some accounts, see Roland Benedikter and Markus Molz, 'The rise of neo-integrative worldviews: towards a rational spirituality for the coming planetary civilisation?' in *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, eds Hartwig and Morgan, Ch. 1; and the references in Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 222 n.5. The affinities and disaffinities between Bhaskar's metaReality and the metarealist tendency in Russian poetry and cultural theory dating from the 1970s and 1980s await exploration. To the best of my knowledge, there have been no direct links between the two. There is also a metarealist tendency in the visual arts of older and wider provenance.
13 Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 148.
14 The work of transcending the fact/value dichotomy was initiated in critical naturalism (see Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, London: Routledge, [1979] 1998) and is carried through in PDM. For an account of the difference between synthesis and

transcendence in processes of discovery, see Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 155–6, and Bhaskar, 'Beyond East and West'.

15 'Transcendence is alive, as experience, and present everywhere' (Roy Bhaskar, *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul*, London: Routledge, 2000, 49).

16 Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 177.

17 Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, xxi.

18 Bhaskar, *Dialectic*, 183, 301, original emphasis. For an excellent critical realist critique of poststructuralism's prioritisation of difference over union and identity see Alan Norrie, *Dialectic and Difference: Dialectical Critical Realism and the Grounds of Justice*, London: Routledge, 2010, Ch. 7.

19 Jamie Morgan arguably misunderstands *Dialectic* when, in his outline and critique of Bhaskar's case for metaReality, he understands DCR to view emergence as 'the synthesis of parts in a new whole [that] is potentially a radically creative moment that *does not carry forward the basic characteristics of its sources*' (Jamie Morgan, 'What is metaReality? Alternative interpretations of the argument', *Journal of Critical Realism* 1(2): 115–46, my emphasis). It does carry them forward, but in a radically new configuration; the quarks in emergent human bodies do not cease to be quarks. This discontinuist view of emergence is central to Morgan's case against PMR, and its Achilles heel (see below). *Dialectic* stresses continuity as well as discontinuity, universality as well as difference and change, as does PMR.

20 This question came up in the debate between Derek P. Brereton and Tim Ingold in *Journal of Critical Realism* a few years ago. See Derek P. Brereton, 'Preface to a critical realist ethnology, part II: some principles applied', *Journal of Critical Realism* 3(2) 2004, 270–304; Tim Ingold, 'Brereton's brandishments', *Journal of Critical Realism* 4(1) 2005, 112–27; Derek P. Brereton, 'Response to Ingold', *Journal of Critical Realism* 4(2) 2005, 426–34. At the end of his response to Brereton, Ingold suggests that it is an open question '[w]hether critical realism is compatible with a relational ontology' of the kind he espouses. Certainly, CR/PMR emphasises with Ingold that the world is relational and in process, but unlike him marries this with a view of the world as also depth-stratified.

21 PMR incorporates, for example, an understanding of quantum action-at-a-distance and has important similarities with (as well

as differences from) the 'participatory universe' hypothesis in theoretical physics and biology and the view of physicists like Paul Davies that the universe is deeply imbued with immanently evolving meaning and purpose.

22 That the old outlook has been pervasive on the Left, including New Left, is evidenced by the following anecdote recounted by Bhaskar in 2010: 'I remember that, even as late as 1985, when I was negotiating with Verso for the publication of *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, Peter Dews was deputed by *New Left Review* (NLR – whose publishing house Verso was), and presumably by Perry Anderson, to say to me, "Well, emergence is not a scientifically acceptable concept." Yet that was a major part of the realist *critique* of science.' (Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 40, original emphasis). Certainly, the elaboration of philosophical emergentism opens up the conceptual space to think the world as enchanted, and this may have been of concern to the *NLR* emissary; but then one of the implications of a good deal of twenty-first century science is that the world *is* enchanted.

23 I should perhaps add that PMR is in no sense itself a theology or in competition with theology, as it is sometimes taken to be by religionists, atheists and agnostics alike.

24 The other two introductions which I have also been commissioned to write, are Roy Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment*, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, Ca. and London: Sage, 2002 and *The Philosophy of MetaReality, Volume 1*. The former is not exclusively concerned with metaReality. The latter announced three further volumes (see inside front cover): *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality, Volume 2, Between East and West: Comparative Religion and Spirituality in an Age of Global Crisis; The Philosophy of Meta-Reality, Volume 3, Re-enchanting Reality: A Critique of Modernity and Modernisation;* and *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality, Volume 4, Work In: A Manual*. Owing to circumstances beyond Bhaskar's control, these volumes have not been completed. Most of Bhaskar's energies are currently being devoted to his duties as World Scholar at the Institute of Education, London and to setting up the International Centre for Critical Realism, Interdisciplinarity, Education and Social Research there. In my view, nothing of Bhaskar's metaReality project is fundamentally missing from the volumes that have seen the light of day other than some of the finer details.

25 Because the mode of these chapters is popularising, what they have to say on particular points of philosophy that are treated more systematically elsewhere should be read in the context of the earlier discussion. Thus, Ch. 1 seems to suggest that Bhaskar thinks that Hegel did not have a concept of determinate negation (p. 44), but we know from Bhaskar's critique of Hegel in *Dialectic* (e.g. pp. 15, 23–4) that this is not so; hence we must conclude that what Bhaskar means by determinate negation is very different from what he takes Hegel to mean, as indeed *Dialectic* makes clear (e.g. pp. 6, 8, 27–8).

26 'When love with one another so/Interanimates two souls,/ That abler soul, which thence doth flow,/Defects of loneliness controls' (John Donne, *The Ecstasy*).

27 See also Bhaskar *From Science to Emancipation*, xiv and *The Philosophy of MetaReality,* xi et seq., 315f.

28 Mervyn Hartwig, 'Consistency/inconsistency', in *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. M. Hartwig, London: Routledge, 2007, 76–8. Although the transcendentally real self is not named in *Dialectic*, it is theorised implicitly as the deep content of human practice (see Mervyn Hartwig, 'Emancipatory axiology', in ibid., 157–64).

29 Bhaskar suggests at p. 268 that it is the only one, but that is not so – both (1) and (3) are also in evidence.

30 Seo MinGyu, 'Bhaskar's philosophy as anti-anthropism: a comparative study of Eastern and Western thought', *Journal of Critical Realism* 7(1) 2008, 5–28. See also Mervyn Hartwig, 'Introduction' to *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom* by R. Bhaskar, London: Routledge, 2010, xi.

31 Morgan, 'What is metaReality?' Sean Creaven's *Against the Spiritual Turn*, London: Routledge, 2010, is directed mainly at theism and TDCR; in so far as it considers PMR, which it illicitly fuses with TDCR, it is arguably a monument to actualistic and coldstream materialistic misconstrual and, in considering Bhaskar's main lines of argument for PMR, is largely content to reproduce Morgan's position. See Mervyn Hartwig, '"The more you kick God out the front door, the more he comes in through the window": Sean Creaven's critique of transcendental dialectical critical realism and the philosophy of metaReality' and Sean Creaven's response, 'Resisting the spiritual turn', both forthcoming in *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, eds Morgan and Hartwig. Although Garry Potter's 'Re-opening the wound: against

God and Bhaskar', *Journal of Critical Realism* 5(1): 2006, 92–109, announces that its 'principal target' is 'the later work' of Bhaskar (p. 93), it does not mention the philosophy of metaReality.

32 Morgan, 'What is metaReality?', 139, original emphasis.

33 Bhaskar with Hartwig, *Formations*, 179.

34 See also Note 19, above.

35 http://thinkexist.com/quotation/a_human_being_is_part_of_a_whole_called_by_us_the/10110.html. Morgan, 'What is metaReality?', 136, cites the first two sentences. The self of course is here, in Bhaskarian terms, the atomistic egocentric self, not the transcendentally real self. Cf. the quote from Einstein that stands at the beginning of *Reflections*.

36 For the distinction and Bhaskar's critique of the discursive intellect, see Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, Ch. 3, 'The Zen of creativity and the critique of the discursive intellect'. Both the intuitive and the discursive intellect are underpinned by the supramental consciousness of the ground-state.

37 See also Jamie Morgan, 'Judgemental rationality and the equivalence of argument: realism about God', in *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, eds Hartwig and Morgan, Ch. 4.

38 See e.g. the 1997 TV film, *The Proof*, which recounts Andrew Wiles' experience in arriving at the proof of Fermat's last theorem.

39 Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, xi.

40 This is the title of the first of Bhaskar's chapters with me (Ch. 8) in Hartwig and Morgan, eds, *Critical Realism and Spirituality*.

41 Cf. Marx: 'It is as ridiculous to yearn for a return to an original fullness as it is to believe that with this present emptiness history has come to a standstill. The bourgeois viewpoint has never advanced beyond this antithesis between itself and the romantic viewpoint and therefore the latter will accompany it as its legitimate antithesis to its blessed end' (*Grundrisse*, Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1973, 162, cited in Roy Bhaskar, *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, London: Routledge, [1989] 2010, 208).

42 The essence of Bhaskar's immanent critique of Marx is that he did not follow through on the spiritual presuppositions of his project of emancipation (p. 119). See also Bhaskar with Hartwig, 'Beyond East and West', in *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, eds Morgan and Hartwig, Ch. 8.

43 These are the last words in Bhaskar's *Dialectic* (p. 385).

Table 1 The moments of the philosophy of critical realism and metaReality mapped to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain and the twofold process of immanent critique

Stadion/Moment	*1M Non-identity*	*2E Negativity*	*3L Totality*	*4D Transformative agency*	*5A Spirituality*	*6R (Re-) enchantment*	*7A/Z Non-duality*
CR/PMR as a whole: thinking being	as such and in general	as process + as for 1M	as a totality + as for 2E	as incorporating transformative praxis and reflexivity + as for 3L	as incorporating a spiritual or a transcendental dimension + as for 4D	as incorporating enchantment + as for 5A	as incorporating non-duality + as for 6R
form of reflexivity – immanent critique of PDM + CR	classical modernism	high modernism + 1M	modernisation theory + 1M, 2E	postmodernism + 1M, 2E, 3L	triumphalism and endism/ fundamental-ism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A	
TR: **thinking being as**	**structured** and **differentiated**						
CN inflection: **thinking being as**	containing mind and concepts	**negativity**, **dualism, contradiction**, **emergence**					

EC inflection: **thinking being as**	intrinsically valuable	negativity qua absenting constraints (ills)	totality as including **values** (retotalisation)		
DCR inflection: **thinking being as**	alethic truth (reality principle, axiological necessity); underlying identity-in-difference; co-presence; the pulse of freedom	negativity qua (determinate) absence, generalised to the whole of being as real, primary to presence and essential to change	totality maximised by praxis (which absents incomplete-ness); dialectical universalisabil-ity; unity-in-diversity	transformative praxis and **reflexivity** (the unity of theory and practice in practice, emancipatory axiology)	
TDCR inflection: thinking being as	underlying identity-in-difference – transcendentally real self and God (the absolute) as the truth or ground of reality; co-presence	transcendence (the achievement of identity or unity in a total context) as essential to change and the rational kernel of any learning process; creativity	unconditional love	spontaneous right-action (realisation of reflexivity i.e. self-realisation)	**spirituality** fulfilled intentionality; universal self-realisation; reflexivity generalised as cosmic consciousness

(*Continued overleaf*)

Table 1—continued

Stadion/Moment	*1M Non-identity*	*2E Negativity*	*3L Totality*	*4D Transformative agency*	*5A Spirituality*	*6R (Re-) enchantment*	*7A/Z Non-duality*
PMR inflection: the spiritual exposition of being – thinking being as	underlying identity-in-difference (implicitly conscious) – ground-state and cosmic envelope (the absolute, non-duality, metaReality) as the truth or ground of reality; generalised co-presence	transcendence as ubiquitous in everyday life; transcendental emergence (creativity)	unconditional love; transcendental identification in consciousness* synchronicity	spontaneous right-action (transcendental agency, solo or teamwork); practical mysticism; dialectically universalised synchronicity	spirituality as a necessary condition of everyday life; universal self-realisation	**enchantment* –** being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred; generalised hermeneutics and semiotics; enhanced human perception and hermeneutical powers	(awakening of) **non-duality;** being being (cosmic consciousness, at-homeness); human creative powers unbound (the unlimited self)

* Introduced in TDCR but not nearly so fully thematised and argued for.

Note: This is a modified version of Mervyn Hartwig, 'Introduction', *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. M. Hartwig, London: Routledge 2007, Table 1, pp. xvi–xvii. 'Moments' are the phases of the philosophical system as they developed diachronically. 'Stadia' are the fundamental features of the ontological–axiological chain, or the self-structuration of being, as apprehended in the system. Why they are designated 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A, 6R and 7A/Z is explained in Mervyn Hartwig, 'MELD', *Dictionary*, ed. Hartwig, pp. 295–303;. Apart from the fact that 7A/Z and 6R are both elaborated by PMR, it will be seen that the individual stadia of this schema (columns) correspond to the (main emphasis of the) developing moments of the system (rows). This means that (to take the example of PMR), in thinking of being *primarily* as non-duality, PMR necessarily also think it as enchantment, spirituality, right-action, love, creativity and identity-in-difference; and so on for the other moments. The main emphasis or focus of each moment is indicated in bold and may be taken as indicating the chief aporia in the previous phase that it remedies.

Table 2 The philosophical discourse of modernity and the critical realist and metarealist critique

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM)		*The Critical Realist and MetaRealist Critique*		
Moment of PDM	**Defining characteristics**	**Corresponding CR/PMR concepts and critique**	**Moment of CR/PMR**	**Main stadion and concept(s): understanding being as**
classical modernism (CM)	(1) ego-, anthropo-centricity or -centrism, etc. (atomism) (2) abstract universality (actualism, irrealism) (both underpinned by the epistemic fallacy) 'the intrinsic exterior'	the self as social and interrelated at a fundamental level with the cosmos; dialectical universality	TR	1M non-identity being as structured, differentiated and changing holy trinity: judgemental rationality, epistemic relativism, ontological realism
high modernism (HM)	(3) incomplete totality (critique of CM) (follows from (2)) (4) lack of reflexivity (critique of CM) (follows from (3))	open totality, reflexivity; critiques HM's substitutionism, elitism, reductive materialism	CN	2E process including absence or negativity and contradiction; emergence; irreducibility of mind
modernisation theory and practice (M)	(5) unilinearity (5′) judgementalism (5′′) disenchantment	multilinearity, open systems; dialogue; (re-)enchantment	EC	3L totality internal relationality, holistic causality, explanatory critique

(*Continued overleaf*)

Table 2—continued

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM)		*The Critical Realist and MetaRealist Critique*		
postmodernism (PM)	(6) formalism and (6′) functionalism (critique of PDM, stressing identity and difference, and rejecting universality) (7) materialism (critique of PDM)	accepts difference but reinstates unity or (dialectical) universality (connection) and critiques PM's judgemental irrationalism and lack of a concept of emancipation	DCR	4D transformative agency, reflexivity, emancipatory axiology unity-in-diversity
triumphalism and endism/ renascent fundamentalism (T/F)	(8) ontological monovalence (a purely positive account of reality, denegating change)	ontological polyvalence, the reality of absence; accentuated critique of materialism (implicit consciousness pervades being) critique of subject–object duality; false absolute of market and other fundamentalisms	TDCR PMR	5A spirituality the absolute (God); universal self-realisation; co-presence; transcendence 6R enchantment, being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred 7A/Z non-duality (primacy of unity and identity over difference) or the absolute (ground-state and cosmic envelope) – infinite or *unending* possibility; generalised co-presence; transcendence

Note: Columns should be read vertically (developmentally), such that (broadly) T/F > PM > M > HM > CM, and PMR > TDCR > DCR > EC > CN > TR.

Table 3 Key concepts of PMR mapped to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/ phase of PMR>CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/PMR*
thinking being	as *such and in general*	as *process* + as for 1M	as *a whole* + as for 2E	as *praxis* + as for 3L	as *spiritual* + as for 4D	as *enchanted* + as for 5a	as *non-dual* + as for 6R
form of reflexivity – immanent critique of PDM + CR	classical modernism	high modernism + 1M	modernisation theory + 1M, 2E	postmodernism + 1M, 2E, 3L	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A	
key PMR concepts	underlying identity-in-difference (implicitly conscious) – ground-state and cosmic envelope (the absolute, non-duality, metaReality) as the truth or ground of reality; the constellational identity or unity of non-duality and duality; generalised co-presence	transcendence as ubiquitous in everyday life; transcendental emergence (creativity); accentuation of creative power of thought	unconditional love; transcendental identification in consciousness; unification, unity; reciprocity, synchronicity; generalisation of four-planar social being to include mental and emotional *sui generis* realities	spontaneous right-action (transcendental agency, solo or teamwork); practical mysticism; dialectically universalised synchronicity	spirituality as a necessary condition of everyday life; fulfilled intentionality; primacy of self-referentiality; universal self-realisation	enchantment – being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred; generalised hermeneutics and semiotics; enhanced human perception and hermeneutical powers, direct consciousness-to-consciousness causality	(awakening of) non-duality; being being (cosmic consciousness, at-homeness); human creative powers unbound (the unlimited self); open, unending evolution

(*Continued overleaf*)

Table 3—continued

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR>CR	*1M Non-identity/TR*	*2E Negativity/CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/PMR*
modes or forms of transcendence (non-dual components of action)	*transcendental consciousness* (supramental; at or of the ground-state)	*transcendental emergence* (creativity)	*transcendental identification* (feature of consciousness; becoming one in being)	*transcendental agency* (feature of agency; becoming one in or in the context of one's agency)	*transcendental retreat* into self-identity (feature of consciousness; becoming one in being)	*transcendental identification* and *agency*	*transcendental consciousness*
direction of transcendence	ground of 1–4	1. outwards, onto (away from subjectivity into objectivity)	4. with	3. on, at or in (absorption in activity)	2. inwards, into (away from objectivity into subjectivity)	1–4	ground of 1–4
modes of transcendental consciousness	transcendental or supramental consciousness at or of the ground-state	mindlessness (form without content: absence of content)		mindfulness (content without form: repletion of content) → spontaneous right-action → mindlessness			
principles of spirituality	self-referentiality or hermeticism (primacy of)	simultaneity	complementarity	practical mysticism	radical hermeticism (primacy of self-referentiality entails the liberation and flourishing of all beings)		

qualities of the ground-state	transcendental ground	transcendental emergence	transcendental identification or union	transcendental agency	transcendental reflection	transcendental perception	awakening of non-duality
key human ground-state (*dharmic*) capacities	*will* unbound energy or potential freedom (the capacity to do one thing rather than another)	*creativity* freedom as absenting constraints (negative completion)	*love*	*right-action*	*fulfilled intentionality* or self-realisation or enlightenment (positive completion)	*enchantment*	*awakening* of non-duality universal fulfilment or peace
conditions for self-realisation	being in your ground-state (or *dharma*) (absence of atomistic ego)	clear mind, single-pointedness; mindlessness or innocence	pure heart	balanced body	absence of belief in the brute physicality of the world	enchantment	awakening
elements of the human creative process (action)	will (initial impulse or calling)	creation (emergence) thought/ unthought	formation, shaping; feeling or emotion	making (physical action and objectification)	fulfilled or realised intentionality (reflection of objectification to the maker)	enchanted resonance of fulfilled intentionality	awakening to the non-dual ground of fulfilled intentionality (self- and god-realisation)
dialectic of learning	enfolded or implicit knowledge	discovery and recall or anamnesis (emergence of enfolded knowledge)	shaping (binding knowledge back into our innermost being (self-formation) and elaborating it)	objectifying knowledge in practice	reflection or fulfilment		

(*Continued overleaf*)

Table 3—continued

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/ phase of PMR>CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/PMR*
circles of human love	1. self	2. another human	3. all humans	4. all beings	5. the absolute		
cosmogeny (cycles of creativity of being as such, eventually perhaps repeating)	polyvalent foundational impulse (unbound energy from implicit potential enfolded in absence)	creation (transcendental emergence)	formation, shaping	making (objectification)	fulfilled intentionality of the foundational impulse (reflection of objectification back to the creator)	enchanted resonance of fulfilled intentionality	universal awakening of non-duality (self-and god-realisation) open, ongoing
cosmotheogeny (cycle of cosmic creation, eventually perhaps repeating)	self-creation of the creator ex nihilo†	emergence of realm of duality, becoming and time	emergence of realm of demi-reality and of the binding nature of love	individual self-realisation (commence-ment of return cycle‡ from alienation)	individual and universal self-realisation or eudaimonia	individual god-realisation or theosis; (oneness with totality)	universal god-realisation or theosis open, ongoing

† Corresponding to the descent of consciousness in traditional cosmotheogenesis, and to Big Bang in modern cosmological theory.
‡ Corresponding to the ascent of consciousness in traditional cosmotheogenesis.

Note: 7A/Z > 6R > 5A > 4D > 3L > 2E > 1M, so that 7A/Z constellationally contains all the rest.

Table 4 Key moments and figures of PMR mapped to the CR domains of reality

Domains of Reality	***Real*** *experiences, concepts and signs* *events* ***mechanisms***	***Actual*** *experiences, concepts and signs* ***events*** *[mechanisms]*	***Empirical/Conceptual*** ***experiences, concepts and signs*** *[events]* *[mechanisms]*
REALMS OF REALITY	ABSOLUTE REALITY the enfolded, the implicit (the implicate order); fields of implicitly conscious possibility	RELATIVE REALITY the unfolded, the explicit (the explicate order)	DEMI-REALITY the falsely unfolded
SOCIAL PRINCIPLE	**love** and **peace**	**struggle**	**war**, control
PHILOSOPHY	**metaReality**	**critical realism**	**irrealism**
ONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE	**truth**	**realism**	**irrealism**
METAPHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE (1)	**non-duality** (identity, identification, unity) (a property of consciousness)	**duality** (non-identity, without alienation but with the potential for it)	**dualism** (alienation)
METAPHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE (2)	**truth** (most basically the revelation of identity)	**non-identity**	**mis-identification, error, falsity**
ORIENTATION TO BEING	**being being**	**thinking being**	**evading being**
SUBJECTIVITY–OBJECTIVITY RELATION	**unity-in-diversity**	**expressive unity**	**diremption** (alienation)
DIMENSIONS OF THE SELF	**transcendental** or alethic **self** or ground-state (a field of possibility)	**embodied self**	**ego** (a real illusion)
FORMS OF ENCHANTMENT	**enchantment**	**re-enchantment**	**disenchantment** (emergent false level or ideology)

(*Continued overleaf*)

Table 4—continued

Domains of Reality	***Real*** *experiences, concepts and signs* *events* ***mechanisms***	***Actual*** *experiences, concepts and signs* ***events*** *[mechanisms]*	***Empirical/Conceptual*** ***experiences, concepts and signs*** *[events]* *[mechanisms]*
FORMS OF FREEDOM	**peace** (dialectically = universal fulfilment)	**freedom to** (lessening of positive incompleteness or the absence of total development)	**freedom from** (elimination of negative incompleteness or heteronomous determinations)
MODES OF FREEDOM AND UNFREEDOM (non-alienation and alienation)	**autonomy** (identity – true for, to and of itself)	**unity**	**alienation**
FORM OF IDEOLOGY (demi-reality)	**underlying generative falsity** (alethic falsity)	**practical**	**theoretical**
FORM OF ALIENATION (demi-reality)	**self-alienation**	**practical**	**conceptual**
LOGIC OF MASTER–SLAVERY (demi-reality)	**exploitation**	**conditionality** of transactions	**desire** (as dominant motivation)
PATHS TO UNION WITH TOTALITY (a tri-unity)	**truth** (*jnana* yoga)	**practice** (*karma* yoga)	**love** (*bhakti* yoga)
THE HOLY TRINITY OF CRITICAL REALISM	**ontological realism**	**epistemic relativity**	**judgemental rationality**

MODES IN WHICH ABSOLUTE REALITY SUSTAINS, IS CONNECTED WITH AND IS ACCESSED IN THE WORLD OF DUALITY			
FORMS OF UNITY OR IDENTITY (modes in which non-duality sustains duality)	**ground** or basis (ground-state, cosmic envelope)	**mode of constitution** (or reproduction/ transformation) via transcendence	**fine structure** or deep interior† of all aspects of being
MECHANISMS OF IDENTIFICATION (modes of connection of non-duality)	**co-presence** (a property of all beings)	**reciprocity** (a property of animate beings)	**transcendental identification** (a property of consciousness)
DYNAMIC OR EVOLUTIONARY FORM OF MECHANISMS OF IDENTIFICATION (modes of connection of non-duality)	**attraction** (force of unification)	**synthesis** (of spatio-temporally spread phenomena)	**economy** (generalised synchronicity or unfolding, inwardising englobement)
FORMS OF TRANSCENDENCE	**transcendental consciousness** at or of the ground-state	**transcendental agency** or transcendental identification in agency (solo or teamwork)	**transcendental identification** in consciousness

† Fine structure pertains to the empirical/conceptual domain because it is implicit (ground-state) consciousness and can be experienced as such. It pertains also to the real. This concept is not deployed in *Reflections*; it is introduced in Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, xiv.

Note: Correspondences are sometimes loose, particularly in the case of those between domains and realms of reality: each of the realms has real, actual and empirical/conceptual dimensions. The items in bold in the rows after the first can be arranged in a triplex structure in exactly the same way as in the first row (for further exemplification, see Hartwig, ed., *Dictionary*, Table 17, p. 115). Lowermost (primary) levels can then be seen to constellationally embrace upper (secondary) levels, hence to have ontological, epistemological and logical priority over them – the priority of the enfolded over the unfolded, the possible over the actual. Where upper levels, which thus presuppose primary levels, embody categorial error and ignorance, they function to occlude lower levels. Square-bracketed levels are not given in the concept of levels without square brackets but are presupposed by it.

Introduction

Meta-Reality is a new philosophical position. It accepts but goes beyond critical realism, insofar as it pinpoints the reality of non-dual states and phases of being, showing how they underpin and sustain the totality of all forms of human, and indeed all, life. Understanding Meta-Reality is to realise the limitations of the world of duality.

Critical realism already understands reality as structured and differentiated, as in process and changing, as a totality or whole and as containing human, potentially self-conscious, transformative agency. The world that men have made and which we currently inhabit is a world of duality: of unhappiness, oppression and strife—more especially, it is a world in which we are alienated from ourselves, each other, the activities in which we engage and the natural world we inhabit, currently hurtling into crisis and self-destruction.

The philosophy of Meta-Reality describes the way in which this very world nevertheless depends upon, that is, is ultimately sustained by and exists only in virtue of the free, loving, creative, intelligent energy and activity of non-dual states of our being and phases of our activity. In becoming aware of this we begin the process of transforming and overthrowing the totality of structures of oppression, alienation, mystification and misery we have produced; and the vision opens up of a balanced world and of a society in which the free development and flourishing of each unique human being is understood to be the condition, as it is also the consequence, of the free development and flourishing of all.

In developing this vision the philosophy of Meta-Reality confirms and re-presents many aspects of the vision of the great philosophical traditions of the past, but does so in a radically new way, apt for contemporary times. We begin this process of becoming free, that is, of expanding the zone of non-duality within our lives, by becoming aware of all the elements that currently constitute them and throwing off all those elements which are inconsistent with our free, creative, loving natures. In this process we come to realise that the very world of misery and destitution we have created itself contains and is sustained by the seeds of a society of abundance, peace and fulfilment, in which we are all free to express and fulfil our essential natures.

Preface

This book articulates the difference between critical realism in its development and a new philosophical standpoint which I am in the process of developing, which I have called the philosophy of Meta-Reality. It may be helpful if I articulate at the outset certain philosophical features of this development.

A primary feature of the standpoint of this book, and the fuller development which is to follow it,[1] is to stress the ubiquity, and especially the everyday character, of transcendence and spiritual matters traditionally regarded as esoteric, exceptional and/or bizarre or as the products or results of an arduous, privileged, heteronomously acquired practice (insofar as they are allowed to happen at all). *Transcendence, transcendental identification in consciousness* and *transcendental agency* are indispensable features of all human being, social life and indeed a necessary condition for any human act at all. Such phenomena are all characterised by **non-duality**, that is a non-dual structure or form.

The non-dual is not only ubiquitous and indispensable to any mode of (human) being or eventuation, it is prior to dual forms and phenomena, which are unilaterally existentially dependent on them. Though non-duality sustains and underpins the world of duality, which inevitably proliferates, splits, ruptures and alienates, the world of duality dominates and occludes its non-dual basis or ground. In our world it is duality,

[1] *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality*, forthcoming from Sage Publications.

and its characteristic forms of reasoning and behaviour, instrumentalist, mediated, conditional, heteronomous, forced, attached, analytical (in the worst sense of dividing and breaking up), which rules.

The possibility of human emancipation depends upon expanding the zone of non-duality within our lives; and in the first instance upon the shedding of our own heteronomy, so that we become in a way non-dual beings in a world of duality.

Non-duality is basic not only to action and consciousness, but to being itself. To talk of the dependency of the dual upon the non-dual brings us close to traditional critical realist concerns with emergence and stratification. Therefore it is not surprising if we can make out an argument, in terms of the stratified nature of reality for a foundational level, a basic level of being, characterised by the properties necessary for any being to be at all, but also distinguished by the particular features of the being concerned. This is the level of what I will call a being's *ground state*; it is its most essential level, that is the level upon which all other levels depend. Constituting the level in which it is ultimately defined as part of the universe, it therefore must contain what is ultimate and essential to the universe as ingredient within it. From these kinds of considerations we can develop in a relatively a priori fashion the ground-state qualities of humanity.

But we can equally do it the other way round by looking at what is most basic or essential or constitutive in any human situation. Thus we will easily find that every human situation must be characterised by an element of potential (which corresponds to the critical realist 1M domain of ontology), that it must be characterised by creativity (corresponding to 2E of negativity), that is the emergence of something new, even if the novelty is merely put at work in order to repeat or reinstate a sameness which would not otherwise (that is without the novelty) have occurred; that any human situation must be characterised by that form of solidarity, bonding, compassion, care, consideration which we call love (corresponding to 3I. of totality); that any human situation must be one in which each agent in that situation is capable of doing something,

that is performing some action spontaneously and correctly (corresponding to 4D of agency), so that in each situation the agent's intentionality will be in some manner fulfilled (corresponding to 5A)—which is just of course a consequence of the rightness of his or her action at some level.

These ground-state qualities, differentiated in the human world, and for each human being in that world, are connected up to the ground-state qualities of other human beings and indeed beings generally through what I call the *cosmic envelope*. This principle of connectivity of the cosmic envelope enables us to define the next major distinguishing feature of the philosophy of Meta-Reality. For transcendence, particularly in the form of transcendental identification and agency, which are necessary features for any successful communication or action, itself involves a breakdown, an overcoming, of the duality and separateness between things. We thus have an immanent critique of realism—indeed to such an extent that we must take affirmation of the significance of identity, identification and unification, all of which are consistent with both differentiation and development, as the signally defining feature of the philosophy of Meta-Reality, in contrast to critical realism, which is pivoted, in its foundational moments—diachronically, of transcendental realism and synchronically, in the system of dialectical critical realism of 1M (ontology)—on non-identity, and hence duality.

However, the next major feature of this philosophy of Meta-Reality, namely the phenomenon of *co-presence*, undermines existential intransitivity as such. For what it says is that not only can and must two objects become one, the characteristic feature of transcendence; but that each is already implicit or enfolded in the other, this is the defining and characteristic feature of co-presence. (Between non duality and co-presence lies reciprocity, which will be explored in Chapter 4.)

It is an understanding of co-presence which allows us to make sense of the enfolding and unfolding of possibilities within being, including possibilities of human beings learning things and performing acts which they never even dreamt about, or identifying (transcendentally) with beings and at a

level they never knew or thought existed. Such phenomena occur in virtue of the enfolding of alethic truths of (or pertaining to other domains of) other beings, within the being who learns, creates, transcendentally identifies, or whatever. This is the truth of Platonic *anamnesis*, which depends on co-presence. But the phenomenon of co-presence also explains the phenomenon of *karma*. More generally, the phenomenon of co-presence explains what happens when we have unfulfilled or split intentionality. In the case of unfulfilled intentionality, we carry the desire, in the form of an attachment, within us. In the case of karma, we carry the consequences of wrong action – that is action inconsistent with our ground-state – for example the pain or hurt we have done to another, within us and we cannot be free until we have released or freed it. Karma in this way always depends on split intentionality, that is an intentionality or an aspect of intentionality which works contrary to our ground-state. Its real basis lies in the fact that the hurt you have done is co-present within you, a part of you, and remains so until it is consciously experienced by you and you can just clear, release or let go of it, that is, not cling or remain attached to it. In this way the two paradigms of unfulfilled and split intentionality fuse.

Unfulfilled and split intentionality describe two forms in which human beings contain elements of heteronomy which block or check their freedom. When we are free of all such heteronomy, when we contain nothing inconsistent with our ground states, that is we have eliminated negative incompleteness, we may be said to be 'enlightened' or 'realised'. The enlightened or realised being has shed the heteronomy within himself which is the product of his own intentionality, so eliminating his negative incompleteness, and in this sense is free. But such a being, situated on the cusp of the cosmic envelope, will immediately be oriented to the elimination of negative incompleteness which is not the product of his intentionality but the product of the intentionality of others – for he has no ego, or sense of separateness, which allows him to privilege his own lack of suffering and freedom over the suffering and unfreedom of others. At this level we carry the

pain and suffering of all other beings in us not only because of our enhanced awareness and sensitivity, but because of the indivisibility of their freedom and happiness from our own.

At this point we come to another feature which characterises the philosophy of Meta-Reality: this is the commitment of the enlightened being, and proleptically of all beings who access their ground-states (which we must all do to an extent), to a eudaimonistic society, that is a society in which, to quote Marx's vision of it, 'the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all', but which is equally poignantly expressed, within Mahayana Buddhism, by the standpoint of the Bodhisattva who strives unceasingly for the awakening and fulfilment of all other beings in creation. In fact some such commitment is a basic feature of all universalising systems of ethics, and indeed it is a tacit presupposition of the emancipatory project as such.

Although we are all connected at the ground-state, at the cosmic envelope, we can only act in the physical world from where we are and we are unique, bounded and clearly demarcated, concretely singularised beings. So it is we who have to see things to understand them—in the 'I see it', 'I get it' which characterises all learning and communication. Similarly it is we that have to do it in the just doing it which characterises all action and causal efficacy by human beings in the world. So this brings us to the principle of the *primacy of self* or *subject referentiality* and here we have one of the many paradoxes of what I will call the *syntheses of self-realisation*. Because precisely that philosophy which is maximally oriented to universal self-realisation understands that only the agent can act, not just to free or emancipate herself, but even to understand or do anything at all. It is only at this level and in this way that any change in the social world is affected; therefore it is extremely bizarre that critics of the subjective or so-called spiritual approach should accuse the *'hermeticist'* of being unconcerned with collective human emancipation. Rather it is quite to the contrary—for it is just this position which entails and is entailed by a commitment to the establishment and the prefigurative existence of a society in which each being's welfare counts as much as my own.

So now to the next differentiating feature of the philosophy of Meta-Reality. When I talk to you, you do not interpret my words or sentences, you do not hear a set of physical sounds then work out their meaning, you just hear me, understand me, directly, immediately. This is direct mind-to-mind action, not mediated by a series of intermediary causal physical effects. Of course we also have the other paradigm where mind puts matter into action. For example if I ask you to turn the page, and you do, then my mind is directly affecting your mind and you demonstrate this by your turning the page or equally, if you resist my suggestion, not doing so. The point is that my thought or meaning is immediately understood by you without any mediation or physical causality, while your turning of the page is a manifestation of your mind in a material change in the world. Hence these two paradigms are distinct; and we have the principle of *direct* as well as *indirect*, mental, emotional and physical *action* and *causality* between mind and thoughts, emotions and feelings, and our physical being and their properties.

Many philosophers, the most crude or vulgar reductionist or eliminative materialists, have even denied the second, that mind can have any emergent sui generis powers or efficacy on matter. Critical realism has argued against this vehemently; and it is pretty obvious that thought and mind is not only the distinguishing feature of human beings, but an immense creative (and equally destructively creative) force in the world. But understanding that the capacity for mind to read or understand mind immediately or directly is a necessary condition for any social interaction (and we can see analogues of this in animal behaviour, and in nature generally) we must accept the necessity for direct as well as indirect causation at the mental, emotional and physical components of our nature. This means that such critical realist conceptions as four-planar social being have to be n-dimensionally generalised, to take into account, say direct mind-to-mind interaction at the plane of our transactions with others; and that we have to allow that there may be entities, akin to thought-forms or ideologies or what Durkheimians would call collective consciousness,

which are mental phenomena in their own right, quite irrespective of their physical manifestations, embodiments or effects.

This of course further deepens the move that the philosophy of Meta-Reality has already taken in the direction of vastly expanding the ontology of our world. Such an expansion occurs immediately once we break down subject-object duality, because being becomes immediately *meaningful*; just as once we break down the fact/value distinction, being becomes immediately and intrinsically *valuable*. States and situations become intrinsically right or wrong; just as things have a meaning in their own right, quite irrespectively of how we as subjective observers wish to interpret them. I will not dwell further here on these features of a *re-enchanted reality* save to note that when we couple co-presence, re-enchantment, the paradigms of direct as well as indirect non-physical action and the conception of n-dimensionally generalised social space, then our ontology is vastly expanded to allow for the possibility for the enfolding of layers of being not directly or immediately physically perceivable within our physical nature.

So we have the themes of transcendence, and particularly transcendental identification, breaking down duality and disenchantment and the separateness between beings in creation. And the theme of co-presence which even more radically breaks down the idea that in processes of transcendental identification or interaction or involvement I am involving with another outside me. I literally become not only one with the other, I am the other, because the other is co-present within me (and I within her). This leads us on to its distinctiveness as a characteristic theory of action, the next feature I wish to highlight. On the philosophy of Meta-Reality, action can only be successful when it is *single pointed*; that is to say the moment our attention is split, we lose our focus, we lose our way, and our intentionality can no longer be fulfilled, that is our intentions are no longer realised. The consequences of this are very radical indeed. For so long as we have an attachment to a particular result, that is so long as we think and behave conditionally, and our thought and behaviour is not an unconditional spontaneous gift to the world, then we will

be focusing on something other than what we are doing and we will be doing it in a state of a divided mind. Generalising through the ideal of single-pointedness, so that it becomes a norm for one's being, enables a simple answer to the questions 'how do I become successful in life', 'how do I become truly abundant?' etc. The answers become very simple: be clear, coherent and pure (three inflections of the same thing, implications of single-pointedness). That is: be shed, shorn, simplify, eliminate all elements inconsistent with your ground-state (that is all heteronomy). For you can never second-guess your ground-state, you can never out-perform it, all you can do is deviate or delay or block its manifestation and development in the form of the particular embodied personality you are.

So what this ground-state has deployed and projected onto the world is a being which must eliminate what is inconsistent with its projection, and in this way be one with what projected it, a nice re-creation of the structure of creation, at macro-, micro- and hetero-cosmic levels. It might be said this sounds very simple in theory but how does it work out in practice? It is not really so difficult at all. Because on the one hand there are techniques of excellence which we can use to develop our skills and powers, and on the other we also know that we can immediately feel or sense when something is wrong with a situation. This feeling does not necessarily mean that the situation in itself is wrong, it may be that your judgement of it is misconceived; but whatever it is, something needs correcting. And basically the challenge of the philosophy of Meta-Reality is that you do actually know what is right and what is wrong, you do actually know what to do.

The philosophy of Meta-Reality issues in a radical critique of the socio-economic forms as well as the philosophical discourses of modernity. Modernity is governed by the principle of abstract universality, which finds its most striking manifestation in the forms of symbolic logic and money—and few would deny that money (and one can also nicely compare money with both language and the law) is the dominant force in our world today. But the whole logic of modernity, underpinned by phenomena such as money itself, not only exemplifies

transcendental identification in consciousness, but presupposes those qualities of the ground-state that money cannot buy but without which the money system would collapse – trust, love, creative ingenuity, support, consideration, etc.

At the same time the philosophy of Meta-Reality, in re-enchanting the world (of modernity), does not fall back into the traditional philosophical discourse of religion – for no more can a priestly caste mediate between you and your ground state than can a politician. Indeed the syntheses of self-realisation which it effects facilitates sharp critiques of religious and political practices. Yet at the same time the thrust (at least in its rhetoric) of traditional politics, like that of religion, has been oriented to emancipation, the freeing or saving of a being or soul.

Thus it is customary for a religious innovator to start by critiquing some pre-existing priestly interpretation or practice which has deformed the insights of some even earlier teaching or tradition. In the same way in the discourses of politics the radical appeal is always made to the deformation of an original message or meaning which has in some way become corrupted or lost.

While many before have sought to show the transcendental unity or affinity of different religious discourses, or of religion and politics, or of different political discourses, mostly these attempts have fallen flat in a fundamental way. Indeed we can rarely learn anything radically new from the politician or religious leader, because, in our daily lives going about our mundane routines and ordinary activities, in our spontaneous, unconditional, giving, caring, effortless way, we best exemplify, in a microcosmic way, what is truly divine in man. So this is really quite a unique philosophy, in that it says that actually we all have got it right in some aspect of our being, and transcendentally we must have it right – or we would not survive at all. So this is a radical inversion and transformation of existing religiosity and politics, (practices which I also show are not opposed). It asserts that there is a level which already exists, which is exactly right. This is the level that we essentially are, and without which we could do nothing at all and yet which nevertheless manifests and supports

everything else in the totality of our existence, our social and natural life. Perhaps never before has the claim for the immanence, that is the actuality, of the 'kingdom of heaven' on earth been so clear and direct: that heavenly or divine ingredient in us and nature is precisely what sustains the rest; and we construct or tolerate the hell which obscures and dominates it and is currently, in virtue of our very own activities, hurtling the species and the planet to a premature death.

Since none of this could happen without our noble side, the side at one with our ground-states, it is just worth dwelling for a moment on the fact that it could not happen without the tacit or not so tacit support and connivance of our ignoble nature.

For on pain of the grossest reification there is nothing that any entity in the social world can do unless it does it in virtue of human activity, which we can disconnect, which we can transform; and if we cannot transform it, at least refuse. All the supply lines that keep the systems of oppression, of terror, of despoilation of nature (and the cosmos generally) going, operate only in virtue of our activity. This is true even if we want to assert, as I certainly would, the existence of malignant social structures, forces and powers in n-dimensionally generalised social space. Those structures and such powers can only act through or feed off the energy which comes from our ground-states, or the ground-states of other beings like us. All we have to do to effect the universal and silent revolution which the Mother (the Sage of Pondicherry), in one of the three mottoes to this book, at once calls for and identifies is to act in a different way, that is to cut off the supply lines of the malignant structures, forces and agencies.

And this is not only all we can do, it is the very best we can do too, because anything that I do will awaken or evoke an echo, through the mechanism of co-presence, with that other who is in this respect, situation or relation like me, within me, an echo which will be implicit within him too, an echo whose call he may hear; and hearing it, move in its direction, diving to the ground-state, in a way which was initially awakened by my act. This strategy of the dive to the ground-state is just precisely that strategy which will evoke at the appropriate

level the maximal, the most universal effect. For two reasons – because outwardly, any action stemming from it will be maximally coherent, in virtue of the theorem relating the degree of outer responsiveness to the degree of inner submissiveness, that is the width of our effect to the depth of our intent; and inwardly, since I will be evoking precisely just that level of universality or generality which will touch the rest of creation, according to its own specificity. And it is this neglected principle of the *inwardness of being* that the philosophy of Meta-Reality reasserts.

The only thing that prevents us seeing this is the illusion that the world is in some way out there and not in here, that the world is outside us, rather than within us (also). The point is this: that we think of the positive, the outward, the solid, the big as the causally-efficacious paradigm. What we fail to appreciate is that it is in and from the interior, the space within, the hidden depths, the rest between our busi-ness, a pregnant pause, in and from this inerness, that silence, the gap between thoughts, those holes within being that everything new emerges. It is from the space beyond, behind and between thoughts and things that the novelty occurs; and the only kind of new that can effect the change that is required is a new that will be absolutely new, but absolutely universal, and it should not disturb us that we cannot see it, that we cannot predict it, because if we could then of course it would not be that 'new' – that is at once necessary for the survival of our species and for the eudaimonistic society, and for one as the condition of the other.

But whatever is the eventual outcome, there is only one way we can go and that is deeper, inner, into the depths of our being, into the silence from which all true creative innovation springs; and in so doing we shall also be acting in the most successful quotidian, ordinary way, for this is not a level apart from our everyday activity; this is a level of being which we in our ordinary activity already spontaneously access. The problem is when we come to something extraordinary, something difficult, something new (because we do not realise we access this level in every moment of our being), we think we

need to do something extraordinary, something of an order that we have never done before; or we feel that we cannot do it because we are not competent to do so and therefore need an expert to do it for us. But nothing could be further from the truth - because to bring about this extraordinary change all we have to do is be in that same state of our being that we ordinarily are, and stay there even in the domain or context in which we would normally relinquish our autonomy to some other force or functionary. This is a double mistake. First because if we do not do it in our part of being, from our point on the cosmic envelope, no one else can or will (that is no one else can do it for us); and second, because we are already there precisely in the things we find easiest, or most enjoy or experience as effortless. So we are the only true experts, and each one will be an expert in their own particular way, affecting this extraordinary transformation, a truly universal but silent revolution, coming from the ground-state, that is from the space beyond talk, beyond thought, beyond noise.

So let me just summarise the steps of this part of the argument. The first step on the path to freedom is the elimination of your own negative incompleteness, that is the elimination of all blocks and constraints, all the elements of heteronomy which are the product of your intentionality, that is the product of your own split or unfulfilled intentionality. When you have no more negative incompleteness left, in the state of 'realisation', you will be automatically and spontaneously oriented to the elimination of the negative incompleteness of others, that is the elimination of constraints on being which are not the products of your own intentionality in any way. This is the true basis of *dharmakaya*. For in experiencing your unfreedom as my own, even though I have not caused it, I am, in virtue of the indivisibility of freedom, eliminating some of my own positive incompleteness too.

In any such action, we must accept the implications of the thesis of the primacy of subjective or self-referentiality, that the only point of our agency is ourselves, that we are the only place from which, at which we can act. Such action will have two kinds of effects: first an outward (exoteric) effect, in that

it is maximally coherent, and overtly transformative of things in the world; second, an inner or inward (esoteric) effect, in virtue of the phenomenon of generalised co presence. For our action will *evoke* an *echo*, in all beings who are similar or similarly located in some respect; since such beings are co-present within me and my action is co-present within them. This is the first level of the inward or 'esoteric response', which I shall call evoking the echo. Second, such a being may *respond* to the *call* of the echo. Insofar as the echo is heard, the other being may respond to its call. And it may further respond in the *direction* of the call. This is the third level of response, which we may call the *dive* to the ground-state. This dive to the ground-state in the other who has responded to the call of the echo I have evoked (in virtue of generalised co-presence), *moves* that being to the realm of the *transcendent*, which is the fourth level of response. This move to the transcendent takes the other (and all other beings who have similarly responded by diving to the call of the echo) into the *space*, the *silence*, that is the space between talk, thought and dualistic activity, from which all creative ingenuity and the other properties of the ground-state originally and only emerge.

From this silent space we have now a situation of *generalised synchronicity*. For in virtue of that one act of mine, I have initiated or evoked an echo in all similarly situated or related beings, and in their response to the call of that echo, insofar as they have dived to their own ground-states, they have moved into a transcendent space from which anything is possible, a space beyond thought and discourse, a space of silence. This is the response of acting in a spontaneously right way, and is the basis of the universal silent revolution which is the condition of the survival of the species and eudaimonistic society alike.

The final important point to add here is that, in this remarkable phenomenon (made possible by generalised co-presence), everything that happens here involves no greater expertise than that which we normally, routinely and successfully display and accomplish, as a necessary condition for any being, understanding, communication or action at all, in our everyday life.

The world of non-duality (of transcendence, reciprocity and co-presence) constellationally englobes and underpins the world of duality, which nevertheless threatens now to engulf its own basis. That world is heinously destructive. It is time to cast it aside. This book resumes the process whereby we can begin, or rather continue, more effectively, to do so. And the philosophy of Meta-Reality describes the configurational, constellational unity and opposition of non-duality and (oppositional) duality. **Meta-Reality** itself just is that greater reality upon which the world, as it has been hitherto presented, actually tacitly and totally depends. To realise this dependency, that dependency of the world of duality, heteronomy and suffering on the world of non-duality, enlightenment and freedom, is deeply and radically empowering. The philosophy of Meta-Reality is *a philosophy for the present*. For this is not only the only time in which we can ever act, and the time in which we always must act (i.e. can never not act), but never has the empowerment it affords been more timely, more necessary. To reclaim what we have lost, we only have to recognise ourselves for what we are—and in that recognition begins, or rather recommences the process of universal self-realisation everywhere, silently...the dawn approaches, just as the moonbeam fades.

I must thank the numerous and different enthusiastic audiences and participants in workshops and seminars especially in India, but also in America and Europe, over the last fifteen months or so, on whom I have been practising the ideas in this book. Every such event has been truly a holistic performance and anything that has come from me could not have come without them, it is their work as much as mine and to them goes my debt of grafitude. Next I must express my appreciation to my publisher, Omita Goyal, for her zeal, commitment and efficiency. When I met her I was truly amazed that we could wrap up an agreement so easily in half an hour over a cup of coffee – an extraordinary rate of efficiency for any publisher in my experience. Then I must thank all my friends and colleagues for their support and enthusiasm.

Finally I must say that the writing of this book has been in an even deeper sense a holistic performance in that I have been fortunate enough to have had working with me Elaine Parker, without whom this certainly could not have been so easily and fluently written, and to her goes my appreciation and thanks.

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Chapter One

Critical Realism: Beyond Modernism and Post-modernism*

Today we are going to talk about modernism, post-modernism, and beyond it, critical realism. What I will do to begin with is state what I take to be some of the main motifs of modernism and post-modernism and then go on to see the way in which critical realism can sublate, that is synthesise and transcend, these two traditions of thought. First, modernism and post-modernism are very much a medley or assemblage, they are a mixture of different theses and themes. In the case of post-modernism, this is very characteristic of its flavour; but in the case of modernism it is very important to differentiate at the start three distinct traditions. First of all there is the classical philosophical discourse of modernity which arose in the wake of the consolidation of the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries. Then there is what I call high-modernism which is an aesthetic critique of the traditional pre-critical reflectionist epistemology of classical modernism and which criticised that modernism, or that strand within modernism, for its false and abstract universality. This is very much an avant garde movement aesthetically within

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western European culture, which arose between the revolutions of 1848 and 1917, is associated with the work of Joyce and the architecture of Le Courbusier. This is high-modernism. The third tendency which is often pushed together with this, particularly I think in an Indian context, is the thesis of modernisation. The thesis of modernisation arose after 1945 in the aftermath of the second world war with the birth of the newly independent ex-colonies, most especially of course India in 1947. These three traditions, what I call the philosophical discourse of modernity, high-modernism and modernisation, are not unconnected but they all take the form of slightly different critiques of each other. Nevertheless for the sake of homogeneity and ease of argumentation and discussion I will discuss modernism as if it was a whole, a totality. Then I will go on to briefly discuss post-modernism, which we can see mainly as a reaction to modernism but also as an accentuation of certain themes within modernism itself, before I go on to discuss critical realism.

Let us start with modernism. I am going to state seven theses, or perhaps better, perspectives which are typically modernist.

The first is egocentricity. The modern is counterposed to the past and the outside. It needs this contrast. The modern only makes sense in relation to something which is pre-modern or non-modern. It can be egocentric in a very narrow sense, self-centred, or it can be egocentric in the sense of representing a particular nation, or a particular class within a nation, or the aspirations of an elite within a nation. But it always has that contrast with the non-modern.

The second characteristic of modernism is its universalism. This is a false and abstract universalism. The high-modernists, the most prominent intellectual leaders of whom are probably Marx and Freud, themselves pointed this out: that what is actually being presented represents nothing other than the vested interests of a particular, sectarian, especially class interest, falsely and abstractly projected in the name of all humanity. This high-modernist critique of the modernist masquerade, that is its false and abstract universalism, paves the way for

the subsequent practice of ideology critique. That is exposing pretensions to universality, exposing them as the representation or expression of the interests of particular groups and sectors in society. The most important thing about this kind of immanent critique of false claims to universality is that it shows that actually what is projected as other than the modern, other than the ego is in fact essential to (constitutive, in some crucial way) the modern or the ego. For instance, the past and the outside are a necessary condition for the existence of that so-called modernity. There never was a modern state nor a modern mode of production which did not tacitly depend on what it was denying and excluding.

So we have the very nice figure of the tacit dependence of the excluding on the excluded, presupposing in this case an intrinsic exterior or past. This is a very radical form of critique and this has engendered the form of critique that we find in feminism, and in all those movements which express or articulate the interests of those who are excluded from what they essentially constitute or sustain. High-modernism also points to the existence of those systematic structures which I will call master–slave relationships. The exclusion from a discourse, the philosophical discourse of modernity, of a certain group of people, for example the workers, may have been unthinking but it obviously had a specific interest and the interest was that it acted as a screen. It screened and occluded the process most specifically of the extraction of surplus value by means of which the working class was enchained, enslaved. But these exclusions within the discourse of modernity were not just to do with class, they were to do with economies, people, gender, with even categories of layers of our being. For example the discourse of the emotions was suppressed by mind–body dualism. There was a philosophical problem about the relationship between mind and body, but no philosopher ever talked about the emotions, so the existence of love was excluded from discourse. This is a very interesting form of critique. What the high-modernist critique of modernism, initiating in contemporary times this practice of ideology critique, did was to show the necessary dependence of a false

theory, an ideological theory on its true ground, on its truth. What we had here was a complex formation which I called a TINA formation. TINA stands for There Is No Alternative. There was actually no alternative for capitalism or for the bourgeoisie but to presuppose in its practice the existence of that which in its theory it denied. This tacit presupposition of a layer or level of being which is formally denied or excluded or otherwise less than fully recognised is a very important figure for all radical critique.

The third feature of modernism follows immediately from this—the feature of incomplete totality.

The fourth feature also followed immediately from this, that is the lack of reflexivity of modernism.

The fifth feature of modernism needs a little bit more time. This is its unilinearity, its assumption that basically history must unfold in a certain way. This unilinearity is very close to what I call actualism, it is very deterministic, it rules out both a multiplicity and a plurality of causes of development and it is explicitly judgemental. Because if you are not modern then you must be doing something wrong. This judgementalism within modernism is very strange—because modernism typically denies the possibility of making any rational judgements about matters of value. That is, it accepts what has been called Hume's Law: that there is no way you can get from a factual to an evaluative statement. And it explicitly commits itself to a disenchanted view of reality: that is reality is denied meaning, significance and value. And if our discourse of a reality is denuded of meaning, significance and value then it becomes arbitrary and subjective.

Nevertheless in some way the judgements of the modern are always upheld against the non-modern. And it will be clear from what I am saying that this distinction between the modern and non-modern is itself a very arbitrary and subjective distinction. Because the ancient Greeks had it, the classical, medieval theologians who integrated Greek and Christian thought had it, the Renaissance had it; it is as old as the hills and it is always shifting.

So what is the implicit meaning here? The implicit meaning of this kind of modernism is always what I have called ontological monovalence. That is putting a stop to history: endism. Wherever we are, we have reached the end, in the sense that there is nowhere further to go, no future precisely because there is nothing left to do in the present, we exist in the best of all possible worlds. What we have got now is a plateau, in which there is only need for minor adjustment, which is in some way the realisation of all that man can attain to. I call this ontological monovalence because it is predicated on an elimination of negativity which is a very ancient categorial mistake within western philosophy. It started with Parmenides who said you cannot think the 'not'. So there is no 'not' in reality, there is no negation in reality. If there is no negation in reality, that is there is no absenting of what was there, or there is no presenting of something new which was not there. Then there is no change, process, or development and it is a very easy ideological sleight of hand to fall into the glorification of the status quo, of your status quo, of my status quo, my egocentric status quo. I have already mentioned Marx and Freud as instigators of the auto-critique of modernism from a standpoint of high-modernism. Here we can just invoke Nietzsche: this is a very characteristic Nietzschian theme: 'the end of history' and 'the last man' is still going on now, even within post-modernism. The latest major theorist of this was Fukuyama, who said that, following the collapse of so-called actually existing socialism between 1989 and 1991, history had come to an end, that capitalism and the liberal bourgeois view of things had been finally ratified by history. This claim has been made again and again and again.

The sixth important thesis or position of modernism is a formalism. This formalism is a very complex thing. For a start it results in a glorification of formal, analytical, abstract, quantitative modes of reasoning and modes of being. What is very characteristic of critical realism is its categorial realism. (I am saying this in parentheses now.) When we criticise a mode of thought, when we criticise a categorial structure, we are also criticising a mode of being. For critical realism categories like

causality, space, time, law are not subjective classifications or ideas about reality. When they are real, they are intrinsic to reality itself. Just as Ohm's Law describes certain properties of electrical currents and fields, so the concept of law describes certain features of reality itself. Always when we are critiquing forms of thought, we are critiquing forms of being. So this formalism, this abstract analytical way of looking at things, actually reflects a lot of very interesting things in society. It is undialectical, but it also prioritises the discursive over the intuitive intellect, it prioritises the left brain over the right brain, it prioritises certain literary idioms over others, it devalues poetry, for example, as against science, it prioritises the masculine over the feminine, and lots of other interesting asymmetries and qualities that we will come onto in the discussion. The formalism was most rigorously thought out in relation to the form/content distinction. For the modernist content was irrelevant. The very early modernists just assumed that the content of thought and being was given. Somehow mechanically imposed on the world. This was a very Humean, positivist way of looking at things. The high-modernists were not Humeans, were not positivists. They were Kantians, so they were very interested in the actual formal structures we imposed on the world. The post-modernists are non-dialectical post-Kantians. To revert to modernism, there was an emphasis on form against content. In relation to the natural world what this meant was that in a way the autonomy of nature was rejected, or it was assumed that nature was there as a plastic object for human manipulation. There was the assumption of the plasticity of nature, of objects. Now that the world is plunged into eco-crisis we all know that nature has a being in its own right, that nature has a recoil to human manipulation, but this human manipulative instrumentalist mode of intervening in nature was, and still is, very characteristic of modernism.

At a philosophical level the most basic assumption here was the denial of ontology. This is the single biggest feature of modernism. And of post modernism likewise. The idea is that you cannot think being, that being itself cannot be spoken of. This came into vogue with Hume; and Kant was thought to

have proved it. This denial, the denegation, of ontology is something about which I will talk much more later. But this denial of ontology merely means of course that when you are talking about x, what x is, that x is something in the world, even when you are talking you are engaging in an ontological gesture. That is, you are assuming that what you say has meaning, that it can be referred to by other speakers, that it is real. This implicit ontology that was secreted is just the object of the critiques of that early critical realism which the Chair and our host today has so nicely digested for us. Critical realism says that from the outset you have to think the irreducibility of being. Then you have to think the negative in being. You have to think determinate absence, you have to think process and change. Then you have to think being holistically. This is another element where the formalism of modernism jarred very much. All the relations that the modernists discussed were mechanical and external. Nothing was internal, organic, holistic, totalising. Then critical realism says you have to think being as involving the transformative agency of human beings. Human beings who are themselves not reducible to their behaviours. Human beings who are capable of reflexively monitoring and changing their mode of acting in the world. Formalism was a very important feature of modernism.

The final feature that I would like to draw attention to is its materialism. This may sound slightly shocking to some because in many quarters materialism is regarded as a well worked-out philosophical concept. I do not think it is a well worked-out philosophical concept but we can go on to that later. But typically the modernists assumed a reductionist materialism. They tended to undervalue the role of ideas, of consciousness, of intentionality in human life. Of course, when you do that you eliminate the difference between the human and the non-human. You take away everything that is truly characteristic of the human world which has to be understood as agentive, that is as involving human agency, presupposing intentionality, and thus consciousness and ideation. For example, if you are a Marxist you place priority on the role of technology. What is technology other than the objectification

of ideas? What is a machine but the objectification of an idea? Marx himself said that the human realm is posited on a double freedom: a freedom from instinctual, that is, mechanical determination and a freedom to act in a planned pre-meditated way. So for Marx intentionality was the root of everything he had to say about human beings. It is important to note that when I am criticising reductionist materialism, I am not actually criticising the inspiration of the thought of Marx, but rather the abuses of that thought by some Marxists in Marxism; and something which is a very general current characteristic of modernism as such.

But of course modernism was also materialist in a more basic way. Just as formalism had given rise to an instrumentalist plastic mode of manipulating nature, so it led easily to an instrumentalist mode of treating human beings. Instrumental reasoning is the characteristic mode of reasoning of modernist thought. Everything is to be done in a calculative way, everything is conditional, everything is to be looked at as a means to an end which is in some way chosen by a subject—who knows how? The modernists certainly do not have an answer for that. In the context of that kind of framework, materialism for modernism means something very simple, it means that I am an individual and that I am distinct from other individuals though I may share certain interests with them and that at the centre of the individual is what could be called a homunculus or an ego. This ego has a sense of its own identity. Opposed to this ego is an object world, a world of objects to which it is more or less attached which stands apart from the ego. The ego also stands apart from all other egos so all the relationships it has with other egos are contractual. Even the love between a man and a woman, husband and wife or whatever, is somehow a contractual relationship. I have come from England just now and I have noticed there how presents at Christmas are basically contractual, basically negotiated—what you are going to give me depends on what I am going to give you, that sort of thing. It is in no way an expression of love or greetings, not for the other person, let alone Jesus or the divine; it is rather something which has

really entered into a semi-commodified realm. That sort of materialism is also a very important feature of modernism.

If there is a single couple that can be said to be characteristic of modernist thought then it is the isolated ego, the isolated individual with a sense of its own identity, its own existence separate from the rest of the world, and that world as described in an abstractly uniform way. Every particular in the world is an instance of an abstract generalisation. To this abstract universality I am going to counterpose dialectical universality. And to the idea of the isolated ego I am going to counterpose a much more differentiated conception of individuals as being concretely singularised. The general flavour of what I am working towards can be said to have been prefigured by Marx in his vision of a communist society in which he said it would be a society in which the free development of each was the condition of the free development of all. Notice the way it is put, the free development of each, that is the respect for the concrete singularity, the uniqueness of every human being, that was to be the condition for the free development of the totality. The idea of singularity and universality, the idea of the one and the many, the particular and the general are at the very beginning of philosophical thought. And what I want to do today is to show how (post modernism having swung to the other extreme, highlighting identity and difference as against abstract universality) through critical realism we can work our way to a more complex, mediated but true notion of universals and particulars.

To summarise, these are the main features of modernism:

egocentricity;
false and abstract universality;
incomplete totality;
lack of reflexivity;
judgementalism combined with unilinearity;
formalism in those multiple senses; and
materialism.

What are the main features of post-modernism? In discussing post-modernism what I will do here is not mechanically

relate one to the other but go through the central features of post-modernism (I shall be discussing ten in all) in the way in which post-modernists actually highlight them.

First of all post-modernists highlight what I will call epistemic relativity. That is, there is an emphasis on difference, relativity and pluralism. It is important to stress that for critical realism there is no incompatibility (but rather mutual entailment) between ontological realism and epistemological relativism, and between both and judgemental rationalism. On the other hand, for post-modernists an understanding of the truth of epistemic relativity has always seemed to rule out ontological realism, commitment to a real world and judgemental rationality, commitment to the rationality of choice. The first feature of post-modernism then is relativity. The second is a linguisticism. There is an accentuation of the emphasis on language, characteristic of the 20th century. The third feature is a denial of the possibility of saying anything about the true nature of reality, that is ontological irrealism. Fourth, we have judgemental irrationalism, a denial of the possibility of giving better or worse grounds for a belief. Fifth, we have life viewed as a pastiche, an assemblage, not a totality or a whole. Sixth, we have a complete failure to universalise. This is an acknowledged 'failure' for it is, in fact, universality itself which is the thrust of the post-modernist critique of modernism. But this failure does mean that it can not only not come to terms with phenomena such as globalisation, but it cannot come to terms with the universality of post-modernism itself as a popular (and globalising) ideology. It is, I argue, an ideology of alienation, fragmentation and split, but just as such, it is a universal ideology within the world today. Seven, we have an incapacity to sustain a concept of human emancipation. This follows, of course, from its incapacity to give better or worse grounds for a belief. Next, we have here a heightened sense of reflexivity. This prima facie seems an improvement in comparison with modernism, but in reality only one aspect of the reflexive relation is thematised. Reflexivity involves an understanding of the self in relation to its context; and the consequence of the failure of post-modernism to sustain

adequate contextualisation means that its increasing emphasis on self is ultimately nugatory of any true understanding—for self only makes sense in context, and the consequence and condition of the collapse of any theorisation of the real world is the collapse of any adequate theorisation of its own context. So actually the reflexivity cannot sustain itself. You have to ask, how is the reflexive move or turn done, how is it initiated. Nine, you have a closeness to the politics of identity and difference, to the feeling that modernism had either been uncritical, in which case it represented the interest of the status quo, or where it had been critical, as for example in Marxism, it had not taken into account the differentiations within the masses or of the people or the working classes that it spoke for. For post-modernists, the high-modernists in particular, in trying to sustain a conception of universality which would not express the interests of a particular class (as the classical modernists had done), nevertheless fell into an analogous trap because they expressed merely the interests of an elite, who would substitute themselves, once more, for the totality, the non-elite populous. So we had leaders speaking for the working class, then we had the male working class speaking for the whole working class, or some section of the male working class speaking for the whole of the male working class. So what arose in response to this was the politics of identity and difference. We had things like feminism and movements representing other repressed so-called 'minority' interests, which are often in the majority, of course, throughout the world. The final feature of post-modernism is a kind of irruption of some things which modernism failed to talk about. For example there is in some post-modernism the beginnings of a discourse on the emotions. There is a kind of acceptance that the discursive intellect, particularly as theorised by analytical reasoning, is not the be all and end all of what the human brain or consciousness can do. These then are the main features of post-modernism:

relativity,
linguisticism;

ontological irrealism;
judgemental irrationalism;
lack of totality;
lack of universality;
lack of a conception of emancipation;
a heightened (but unsustainable) sense of reflexivity;
proximity to the politics of identity and difference;
traces of suppressed discourses, e.g. on the emotions

Now I am going to look at how we can situate an explanatory critique of post-modernism from a critical realist point of view, understanding post-modernism as a reaction to modernism or to the forces that modernism represented. The best way of doing this is not to go through the whole development of critical realism but to just take four important themes or stadia from a quite late formulation of critical realism, which I call dialectical critical realism and which was formulated in my book *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. This in a way resumes the development of critical realism up to about the mid-1990s. We are not missing anything just by starting there. In my more recent work I have added a fifth aspect to the development of critical realism which I will come to a bit later. The moments of dialectical critical realism, all of which represent layers or categories that western philosophy has denied, have been nicknamed in the West as the MELD schema. In the first moment of 1M of ontology, the 'M' stands for moment. The second which I call Edge, 2E of negativity, is where the E of MELD comes in, and is the edge of negativity, of contradiction, dialectic, process and change. The third level, where the L comes in, is the level of totality, of concepts of universality, singularity, subjectivity, objectivity and so on. Where the D comes in is the fourth dimension, the dimension of human transformative praxis and reflexivity. With the transcendental or spiritual turn within critical realism MELD became MELDA and we had a fifth aspect (with 'A' for Aspect) which gives a new

[1] This involves a deeper stratum or level of reality which can be called the transcendental in a deeper and more 'spiritual' sense than the 'transcendental'

inflection to all these earlier moments. I will incorporate that within my discussion. Here we come to a characteristic feature of a critical realist critique of an opposition or duality: critical realism does not take sides, evaluate strengths and weaknesses of one or other pole, but goes to the common ground which explains the duality and, in understanding the weakness of that ground, transcends it.

Let us look at ontology. Why is ontology so important? Modernists and post-modernists both agree that ontology is impossible. So what is the status of this discourse which maintains that ontology is possible? It is either impossible or it is real. If you say to the anti-ontologist, what do you feel about ontology, and he says to you that it is impossible, then ask him to repeat it. Then ask him if what he has said is real. If he admits it is real, then some ontology is after all possible, and we have the thin edge of the wedge to a fuller ontology. If he says it is not real you just turn the other ear and say sorry, I did not hear you. So of course all discourse presupposes the causal efficacy of ideas and causal efficacy of words. If I say to one of you here, put up your hand please, my speech action is causally efficacious in producing a change in the material world. Of course my speech action and that material result or consequence must be part of the same world. In fact everything is included within ontology. Everything is real. Contradictions are real, mistakes are real. There is nothing which is not real. That does not mean that there are not differentiations within the real. For example, a differentiation between the knowledge and its object or a differentiation between a belief which is an illusion but which is nevertheless real. To say a belief is an illusion is not to say the belief is not *real*; it is to say the object of the belief does not exist. But the thought, or the belief that the object of the belief exists, exists.

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in transcendental realism, which denotes at once (merely) the form of argumentation (transcendental argumentation) and the transcendence of being to knowledge, that is the irreducibility of being to knowledge and the constellational surpassing of the latter by the former – these are relative and formal senses of transcendence whereas the transcendence that is stressed in this latest phase is absolute and material.

It is absurdly paradoxical to deny the subject matter of ontology, to deny being, because everything is included within being. You have to ask what actually happens within systems of thought which reflect systems of behaviour where ontology is denied. Actually, tacitly presupposed is a particular ontology. This is a flat, undifferentiated, unchanging, unstructured ontology. This is the ontology of the Humean world, of Humean causal laws in which everything that happens in the world can be subsumed under an empirical invariance, under a constant conjunction of events in which there is no novelty, no change, no depth, no difference and which ultimately is a completely untenable world. It is a world in which science could not get a handle on. It is a world in which simple acts like drinking a cup of tea and coming in and listening to this talk are inconceivable. So this world is absolute nonsense. And what critical realism did, through transcendental analysis of the most valued scientific activities (such as experimentation or applied engineering), was show how science itself presupposes a different world. Positivism is a completely false ideology of natural science. And this false ideology of natural science, through their failure to thematise ontology, is actually taken over by radical critiques whether they be Marxist on the modernist side or post-modernists alike. Habermas, for example, has a theory of knowledge-constitutive interests and his knowledge constitutive interest in prediction and control is an interest which is informed by an account of the world as structured by Humean causal laws and explained in accordance with the Popper Hempel theory of explanation. That is, it is a world of mechanical Humean causality. And because of that Habermas can never come to terms with nature and so we have dualisms between the natural and the social world. Actually when you look at the characterisations that these sorts of hermeneuticists or neo Kantians give of the social world they are completely lopsided because they never insert, embed, nest, the conceptual, symbolic, cultural within the natural and material context in which it alone has meaning. They deny the possibility of scientifically studying a world which is also symbolically mediated. So there are lots of other consequences that flow from this failure to thematise ontology.

What must happen if you actually believe such a philosophy when you go into the world? Suppose you are a scientist who thinks that you are discovering constant conjunctions of events in the laboratory. When you go out to do your applied work in the field then you must tacitly presuppose a different account of causal laws: an account of causal laws as being the efficacious tendencies of structures which operate independently of whether or not they are actualised in a system of events. Independently, the same laws apply whether or not the bridge breaks, whether or not you go out of a second floor window or by the door, the same force of gravity is operating on you. So actually this ideology consists in an inconsistent ensemble in which the necessary presupposition of the truth, the true, is a condition for the belief and practical efficacy of the false. So we have a very important structural formation in thought. This is the TINA formation which I mentioned before in which a real truth is necessary for a false reality. This real truth I call the alethic level of truth. That is, the truth as real. So in a full analysis of 'truth' one can go through different levels of understanding that concept, including purely epistemological ones, but in the end there is a level of truth which is real and that is alethic truth. So tacitly you are going to have to presuppose the truth in practice. The interesting ideological figure here is that in which the falsity actually depends upon the truth; but it screens, masks, denies and dominates it. What happens if you take this figure seriously? According to Chomsky we all, in virtue of our being human beings, have immense linguistic powers. We have the creative capacity to produce sentences which have never been generated before. Because of this we are basically essentially free and that freedom is presupposed even in the statements of behaviourists. That freedom is intrinsic whether it is denied or not. But of course if you ask people whether or not they are essentially free in that basic sense they will say, well I am not. Then you ask them: could you say that in a different way? They will then not say 'I am not', but will freely show their capacity to generate a new way of saying it. This becomes very important in the later developments of critical realism. For a very

fundamental theme of liberatory thought, emancipatory thought throughout the world, is that there is a level of reality which we have or one in which we are basically free, noble, divine, creative, loving. Thus Rousseau—man is born free but is everywhere in chains.

This is not an isolated statement. When Marx, to use that formula I have already invoked, says we can have a society in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all, he supposes that we are all in essence creative beings who can have the respect, the tolerance, love, compassion, solidarity to allow all of us to flourish freely in unity. Let us take the analysis of something more specific like the master–slave relationship involved in capitalism. Suppose we take a very routine assembly line. What could be more mechanical than that? Actually the assembly line, no matter how routinised, only keeps going because of the spontaneous creativity of the wage slaves or the workers or the servers there at the most basic level—because the machines are always going wrong. Who has had experience of a machine that goes right all the time? No one. Everyone's computers are always going wrong. This you might say is a very naive level of creativity, but I cannot see the distinction there.

Let us take the phenomenon of love. Who would deny that in all our contemporary societies hate, anger, violence are dominant over love. But take the phenomenon of war. Is that not a terrible thing about our societies? How is it sustained? By the solidarity of the soldiers at the front, their willingness to sacrifice themselves for each other and their cause, by the support and sustenance of their sisters, wives, daughters at home. It is love which sustains all the negative emotions and all the forms of oppression and violence. Similarly it is creativity which keeps exploitation going. If we just dig into those truths then we begin to have a view of human beings as potentially autonomous and free and that actual potential autonomy and freedom as sustaining the very structures of heteronomy, exploitation and oppression. Once you realise that, it can be very empowering. For the more deeply you go into some social or personal problem, no matter how befuddled

that situation seems with misery, unhappiness and confusion, the further you dig, the more you will find that it subsists upon a level of joy, bliss, love and creativity. And what I claim is that, it is this level which not so much distinguishes human beings from the rest of nature (because we do not begin to understand in western science the rest of nature properly), but sustains the very problem that initiated your digging. Those oppressions and miseries, that suffering and pain, that everything which you would have otherwise in that aspect of your social life is underpinned by what you must essentially are, and depends totally, unilaterally, on it, in a way which you do not depend on it. That is how radical you can get when you go deep into ontology.

But I have not said anything about judgemental rationalism because a post-modernist would say well, that is just your belief, what shows that your belief is better than my belief? It is interesting here because post-modernism has a sort of twin, a cousin which is fundamentalism. Fundamentalism differs from post-modernism. They both accept difference, the essentiality of difference and the non-existence of universality and unity. But the post-modernist says yes, we differ, and there is no right and wrong. The fundamentalist says yes, we differ and I am right. There is a difference in rhetoric but the basic stance is the same. There is no essential unity. Judgemental irrationalism, the idea that it is not possible to give better or worse grounds for one belief rather than another, is very characteristic of western philosophy. Hume, for example, said it is rational to prefer the destruction of the whole world to my little finger. Is that not an extraordinary remark? Is it not a contradictory remark as well? Because the destruction of the whole world would include his little finger. So what he is doing, is putting himself or his little finger outside the world. When philosophers do this kind of thing they exclude themselves from the totality they are describing. That is how they tacitly assume that their judgement, Hume's finger, is more important than the whole world. That is the secret meaning of it, the only way it makes sense.

Judgemental irrationalism became very fashionable around the 1970s with the so-called problem of incommensurability

in science. Radical post-Kantian (rather than neo-Kantian) philosophers like Kuhn and Feyerabend said that in science you can have two systems of belief which are so radically different that they share no meanings in common, and when there are no meanings in common it is impossible to say that one is better than another. For a start, there is something very peculiar about that formulation. For if you say that Einsteinian and Newtonian theories of mechanics are incommensurable then why do you not say that Einsteinian theory is incommensurable with music or cricket? Why are you comparing it with Newtonian theory, why not compare it with a game of cricket, why not compare it with art? Obviously, tacitly, Kuhn and Feyerabend know that they are talking about the same thing, but they do not want to admit it; perhaps you might say that this is a polemical point really. How do you get them on their own criteria? You can accept that the two theories have no meanings in common and still you can choose between them. How? You can say Newtonian theory describes the world and explains it under its own descriptions in x number of circumstances and does so completely correctly. Einsteinian theory explains and describes the world under its descriptions in x plus nine circumstances. It accounts for Mercury's perihelion and Newtonian theory does not. There are probably about nine or ten test situations now. That is all that separates the two theories empirically. But Einsteinian theory is far superior theoretically—in scope, beauty and power. Newtonian theory is much more useful for engineers. But just from the point of view of which is true and false, the so-called incommensurability of the theories does not matter a jot. In this case you have a simple, in fact purely quantitative, criterion for preferring the one to the other.

I have said a bit about the first domain of critical realism of ontology. The second domain is that of negativity. This is very important. Marx talked about the rational kernel of Hegelian dialectic which he said Hegel had mystified. So what is the rational kernel? The rational kernel is in fact a developmental process driven by absence. What happens in a scientific theory for example, is that you have an incompleteness. You leave

out some aspect of reality; that incompleteness generates a contradiction, which necessitates a move to a greater totality as described and explained by a new transcending concept. That is the fundamental process of development in science and in all walks of life and arguably nature. It all depends on absence. It is driven by absence and it is rectified by absence because the new idea does not come from induction nor from deduction, it comes from neither, from nowhere. The synthesising concept of the moment of breakthrough is an irruption out of the blue, de novo, it comes from a level of reality which is beyond the threshold of discursive consciousness. That is inspiration in science. It is not really understood that imagination, visualisation is important to keep even ordinary science going. Ordinary science is not algorithmic. Ordinary science is a very creative, dynamic, expansive process. But *it is in* the very moment of breakthrough to a new concept that you have genuine novelty, that is the emergence of something that was not there before.

Absence and emergence go hand in hand. Emergence is the positive bi-polar of absence. What happens in these flashes of inspiration is a kind of transcendence in science in which a new concept, something that has never been dreamt or thought of before, irrupts into the scientist's imagination. Then it is gradually worked into a fully developed theory which can explain the previously known world in a new way. But it comes in that flash from nowhere. And that is the moment of transcendence within the transcending move to the greater totality that resolves the theoretical impasse. This concept of transcendence is very important. For transcendence is such a common and familiar feature in life. You can lose yourself in a walk, you lose yourself in identification with music. You become one with the music. This was of course the goal of the mystics, to become one with something higher than their normal self. Either with their essential self or with God in some form or another. But transcendental identification is common in everyday life. It is not something to be opposed to ordinary life, it is something which is necessary to keep ordinary life going. This all really begins to break down the

subject–object duality which is so characteristic of our contemporary world—our world of duality, alienation, contradiction and crisis.

One other theme is of course the poverty of purely abstract, formal, analytical reasoning. There is nowhere in science where you will actually get a stable belief system coherently worked out into a deductive schema. Not in the living process of science. Where that happens is in the writing up of a research report so it can be well refereed and published in a journal and help your career. Otherwise scientists never obey the laws of formal logic, they never observe analytical reasoning. They always think dialectically. Thinking dialectically means you think, pull, stretch, twist, tease concepts to capture a level of reality that your existing language is not adequate for—precisely because it is new, different, deeper. We thus have the theme of the dialectical critique of analytical reasoning. And then we have the critique of something which is very common in western thought, that is the assumption that negation and change is always in the predicate. The subject is fixed, any change is always inessential, it does not affect the subject itself. But of course we know that beings in the world are in process and that their essential selves are changing and in development. There may be a layer of a thing which is unchanging, but there are many aspects and layers which are not, and we have to justify the assumption that there is an unchanging layer. All of this points to the importance of negativity and absence.

Some western philosophers had talked about negativity before; Hegel of course is famous for his so-called emphasis on it but what actually happens is that the only negative concept that Hegel ever theorises is the concept of nothing. So you go from being to nothing, from nothing to becoming and then everything else after that is positive. So the absence and negativity in Hegel is indeterminate; whereas in critical realism it is determinate absence. The absences critical realism is concerned about are the absence of food in people's bellies, the absences of roofs over their heads, determinate absences, determinate lacks. It is these determinate lacks which drive

the dialectic of scientific discovery and development. What I am saying about Hegel justifies what Marx said about him and what the left Hegelian said after his death: that he was essentially an apologist for the Prussian state, that at the end, negativity was eliminated, ejected from reality. That is the second moment or stadium of dialectical critical realism.

If in the level of ontology the most important new insight of the fifth aspect was that of alethic truth, the level of truth as real, the most important new insight here is the notion of transcendence and transcendental identification as being essential to everyday life, to science, artistic inspiration, etc. I could say that every genuine human act was essentially novel, essentially creative and transcendence was implicitly involved in it.

The third level we move on to is the domain of totality. The most important concepts here are concepts of totality itself, of universality, of objectivity, of holistic causality. We do not assume that relations between objects and beings are external—they are internal. That is, my relationship, my being will be affected by your being, my essence will be affected by your essence. It has been said that to be is to be related. This is not far from the perspective of critical realism. We are in our essence in relations. Not just in our accidents, not just in our external realities. What is important here when you come to understand post-modernism is to see that it is a reaction against the abstract, analytical, universality of modernism, and modernism here particularly as an ideology of capitalism.

Let us stick to the philosophical level first. Modernism can be expressed epistemologically in something like the Humean theory of causal laws, and Kant's categorial schemata did not change that, for he continued to presuppose that those self-same empirical invariances constituted reality (mis-categorised as empirical), he just added an active element from the human being onto it. Nor did Hegelian dialectic improve the situation, because Hegel, as Marx said, was actually an uncritical positivist, an empirical realist when it comes to the non-conceptual side of things. The Humean theory of causal laws describes the world as a monotonous repetition of the same. All individuals,

all particulars, are absolutely uniform. This means that every pen is the same, every human being is the same, every talk is the same. This is counter-intuitive.

It is reflected in ethics, in Kant's categorial imperative. Kant said you never, never, never tell a lie. Why? Because then it means that you will never not tell a lie. But everyone knows of some circumstances under which white lies are justified. Why has it always got to be either always one thing or the other? Why cannot it be: sometimes yes, ok; we can accept as a rule never tell a lie, but sometimes in special circumstances we know that lies are justified. This actualism, whether in ethics or epistemology, expresses precisely the remorseless, incessant logic of the capitalist mode of production—with its refrain of the constant repetition of the same. One could argue that the commodification, reification, alienation built into its logic is reflected in the irrealist philosophical logics of modernism (and post-modernism). You might say what about technological innovation, but then innovation is quantitative. Or if there is a qualitative change that is put within a quantitative straitjacket; and if it is not then this just shows, brings out this bigger co-presence or its tacit dependence on something outside itself, something which it must presuppose and at the same time deny—in this case, human creativity.

This kind of uniformalism was also unfortunately implicit in the practice of actually existing socialism and as a result of all this there arose an oppositional politics and epistemology which stressed individuality and difference, the politics of identity and difference. It said, do not talk about us human beings, talk about us women or us Indians or us poets, musicians, etc. This is very understandable as a reaction to abstract analytical universality but in a world in which we are increasingly interconnected, in a world which is facing global crisis, in a world in which the physical conditions for our survival are themselves at sake, this is to throw out the baby with the bathwater. There is something which all human beings share in common.

How then do we view an object? Let us say a human being, but in principle it can be any object. We need at least four

categories to understand any being in the world. One level would be universal, so to understand a particular human being we have to understand everything which is constitutive of all human beings, something which they all share in common. Then we will have to take into account the second level, their specific mediations, their differences, what distinguishes this person as a woman, a teenager, a student of physics, as a basketball player or whatever, a member of a particular caste, religion, committed to a certain sense of identities. Then we will have to take into account a third level, their geo-historical trajectory, where they got to, what got them there. And finally, the irreducibility of an essential uniqueness, that every object in the world is actually or potentially unique, after we have done all the things that they have in common, including the differentiation, the mediations, the geo historical trajectories there will be an irreducible uniqueness and individuality. This schema has got to be applied again and again and again because each mediation will be universal, will be specifically geo-historically trajectorised, will be unique, etc. etc. So it is a basic minimum schema for understanding any reality The one is always embedded and differentiated in the manifold. This is reality as we know it. This is dialectical universalisability; which means that every universal is always concretely singularised and every being which is a concrete singular can only be universalised dialectically. So what is good for you is not necessarily good for me because we are different. There are no universal rules. And even what is correct for me to say to you is not necessarily correct for me to say to her, because different relationships are involved in the two cases. And when people or situations are different, it is wrong to react to them in the same way.[2] We work towards sensitised solidarity. We respect differences, we respect each other, and respecting each other in that way, in respecting each other's

[2] Equity does not mean the same as equality – when people differ, it is wrong to treat them the same, each person must be treated according to his/her own (in principle unique) specificity. This ethical principle reflects the ontological one, that unity does not mean uniformity.

uniqueness, we will be more loving, compassionate, stronger in our solidarity, real solidarity that we can give them.

The phenomenon of post-modernism is tied up not only with globalisation but with post-Fordist developments. But this is not a straightforward matter. There are both inversions within and limits to globalisation. To take an example of the first. If you come from England you will know that Indian food is far more popular. To take an example of the second, women's domestic labour, crucial to the reproduction of labour-power on which the capitalist mode of production itself entirely depends, remains largely unpaid, uncommodified. But this is only the most glaring case. In fact none of the creative work done on the shop-floor or in the office necessary to keep the production line going is ever really accounted for, that is not put into the equation by the capitalists or managers. That unpaid labour, that free creativity keeps the whole show going. When I talked about that loving substratum which sustains war, that is not put into the equation anywhere. We have this dependency of systems of exploitation, of dominant systems on relatively suppressed, sequestered, secluded systems. But often in these secluded systems we catch a glimpse of a better way of being, forms of unconditionality, spontaneity, non-instrumentality, non-exploitative, intuitive, holistic and totalising, caring ways, perhaps belonging to the past, but prefiguring the possibility of their re-engagement in a new future, a future which the present already tacitly presupposes.

Moving on to the fourth domain of transformative praxis. There are four things that I would like to say about agency, intentional agency. First of all we have the irreducibility of intentionality. That consciousness, ideas, always play a role, or it is not an action at all, it is just a mechanical behaviour. Thought and emotion are necessarily involved in the genesis of any human act. Second, we have the irreducibility of agency itself. You have no choice but to act. You cannot not act. If you abstain from acting that is itself an action. Intentional activity is an imperative, we have to act. And this facilitates a critique of what Hegel called the beautiful soul, which could be a critique of some traditions within Eastern and Western mysticism

of abstaining from social engagement, abstaining from materially embodied and practically engaged activity in the world.

The third thing about action is the spontaneity of action. If you just think, think about what you are going to do, you will never do it. If I think about how to pick up this glass of water and I do not at some point do it then it will not be done. At some point action must be spontaneous and basic. No matter how intricate the chain of reasoning, at some point we just act. Aristotle was very correct when he said the conclusion of a practical syllogism, that is a practical chain of reasoning, is an action, it is not a thought. The most brilliant and most ordinary actions are spontaneous, are done without thought. They are done spontaneously. Someone who thinks before they rescue a baby from the road is not going to do it, someone who does it will do it spontaneously, he or she will spontaneously do the right thing. Scientific discoveries, good action, right action, great action are spontaneous action, done without thought. This is not an irrationalism. This is just to balance not only the claims of the discursive intellect with the intuitive intellect but to say there is perhaps a level of consciousness which is beyond thought itself. A level of consciousness within which they are intricately linked with the totality of being. A level of consciousness at which our deepest natures sit. A level of consciousness which connects us with the totality of being but from which our creativity, our loving kindness, our acts of solidarity and at the end of the day our own knowledge ultimately springs. So this level would be a level of consciousness which would be truly cosmic, a kind of envelope surrounding, binding and cohering, unifying the whole of being as a totality, one totality.

You might ask, how can you say it is a level of consciousness which circumscribes the whole of being? Well, this is an interesting question. How can you identify with a piece of music? It does not mean that the music is self-conscious, but that the music must be an object of consciousness which you are capable of transcendentally identifying with and therefore the music is implicit consciousness. If you can become one with music in your consciousness, then in that union, music is

one with you and, as such, consciousness too (and anyway is it not absurd not to regard music as meaningful). This is an interesting line of thought which we can go into another time. On this view there is not such an absolute dichotomy between consciousness and non-consciousness and not such an absolute dichotomy between human beings and the rest of nature as we naively suppose. But let us stick for the moment to the human realm. Let us stick at the level of spontaneity of action. The more you know about a subject the more spontaneously you will do it. When you are starting to drive a car it is first painful and mediated by thought. The more fluent you become and the more you have mastered it, the more fluent you will be and the more spontaneous you will be. This is true of any discipline. This does not mean that you can become a great physicist just by going in and not thinking, it means that you have to do all that thinking and when you are a great physicist you just do it spontaneously. That is the third feature of agency.

The fourth feature is that it must be always located in terms of what I have called four-planar social being. There are four dimensions in terms of which any social act has to be understood. Our material transactions with nature, our social interactions with others, the level of social structure and the level of the stratification of our own embodied personalities. All human action has implications at all levels. There is a distinction which is a very important: that between a being and what the being does. There is a distinction between the self or subject and his or her behaviour. You can say that from a critical realist point of view we are committed to a dispositional realism. That is, we are committed to the idea of the existence of powers irreducible to their exercise. So the whole question of the self becomes a very interesting one and one which I have not really referred to before. Post-modernists are very well known for deconstructing the self—Hume himself tried to find the self and when he looked inside himself he found that it did not exist. So who announced his non existence? Who was this he? What I would say, provocatively, is that the ego in the sense of the separate self, a sense of a separate self-identity

from others, does not exist, that is pure illusion. There is no such thing as an ego. But as embodied personalities we clearly exist. Embodied personality I am and you are, and as embodied personalities we are different and we must respect and love each other. At a third level, a transcendentally real level, the self exists. That self, that alethic true self, that is the source of our creativity, our love, our genius, that is the source of everything which is good and noble that human beings do. That is the transcendentally real self which religious traditions have touched on.

Therefore, the self is actually a very complex thing. From the point of view of understanding social action and understanding social change we have to see this coordinate of the stratified personality as being distinct from others. We want to change society so how do we do it? How do we change society? The theorem of the spontaneity of agency shows that self change must be ontologically, and every other way, prior to social change, so that we can only act as and from ourselves. This is often thought to be a very mystified way of looking at things. It is as if we are abstaining from social action but this is not true at all. The moment we change ourselves, because we are part of society, we are also changing society. If we do not also change ourselves while we are changing society we will project our own problems onto society. This is what has happened again and again in history. We have to get ourselves right and there is no way of getting ourselves right other than by acting in society. So there is a true dialectic here. Individual change is not opposed to social change, but we have to understand that the only way we can affect anyone else is through the mediation of our self. This has the important consequence that emancipation can only come from within. Freedom to do something, freedom to be, to flourish, unlike freedom from something cannot be imposed from without. It must come from within, it must come from the self. What we are always doing in social life and in our individual life is acting on ourselves and acting on the world. And these are two aspects of the same thing. But in principle this distinction must be there. When we have thrown off and shed the heteronomous determinations, everything

that stops us from being what we essentially are, which is loving, creative, in solidarity, in compassion with the rest of the universe, which is having far more knowledge than we ever give ourselves credit for. When we have shed everything inside ourselves and outside ourselves, that is the totality of structures of oppression and exploitation in the world, then and only then would we have a society which satisfied Marx's formula: in that the free development of each was the condition of the free development of all. What would happen then is that every self, every transcendentally real self would be concretely singularised (there would not just be one self, as many spiritual philosophers have thought) but dialectically universal expressions, of the creative, loving divinity which I have been calling the cosmic envelope.

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To sum up. When we are committed to secular projects of emancipation, as probably most of us here are, we have to understand that when we commit or orient ourselves to the vision of society in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all, we are already presupposing a level at which we are already free, a level of pure freedom, of pure creativity, a level which would manifest that love, compassion, solidarity, respect for each other's differences. Where is it to come from? It must be already there within us, and actually it is there within us, not just implicitly, but explicitly – it must be partially but incompletely manifest and this manifestation constitutes the hidden, buried substructure of freedom, creativity, love and spontaneous right action which sustains the totality of the forms of oppression both within us and in society at large. Really the dialectics of liberation are two-fold: the dialectics of shedding and dialectics of engagement, embodiment and realisation. But these two dialectics are asymmetrically related. The dialectic of realisation cannot come before the shedding – we must weed

the garden for the flowers to grow. However, since nature abhors a vacuum, we must fill the space we have created by our acts of shedding—shedding everything that is inconsistent with what we already essentially are—lest any heteronomous level left inside or any psychic garbage floating outside rushes to fill the recently cleared space. 'The devil plays with idle hands' (or 'idle hands do the devil's work') is actually very true.

However this very process of engaging the double dialectic of liberation, a dialectic of shedding and clearing, and a dialectic of development and self-realisation will immediately and automatically take us into a conatus, that is a drive, oriented to the self-realisation of every other being in the universe. So there is no opposition between individual self-realisation, or enlightenment and universal self-realisation, they mutually entail each other. The Buddhist ideal of the Bodhisattva is just an expression of the logic of that. There can be ultimately no individual Buddha-hood without universal Buddha-hood and conversely there can be no universal utopian secular society without individual Buddha-hood, in that sense, individual enlightenment. Moreover, pursued to its ultimate limit, there cannot be the expression of the Buddha-nature anywhere unless there is also the realisation of the Buddha-nature everywhere. Thank you.

We have listened to an extremely interesting presentation, a very original critique of modernist and post modernist perspectives.

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You restricted my freedom. I have two questions. One of them is pretty trivial – and I will just mention it but will not ask for an answer. That concerns the notion of the suppression of the emotions which you said was characteristic of modernism as a

whole, and you mentioned Freud and Marx. But Darwin at the same time, in the period of which you speak, wrote a book called Emotions in Man and Animals. *It was a tome to match in scope and glory something like the* Origin of the Species *and it incorporated a kind of universalism in the sense that it took in animals as part of the emotional universe. I want to tie in this prototype of thinking about the emotions cognitively to your own stand; and I want to ask you about your notion of critical realism which seems to tie in emotions, agency or intentionality and creativity. I take your point about Chomsky saying that every individual is equal because we all have creative powers. But you present your theory as if it did not exist in a context where many other people have tried to theorise intentionality. And what they have said about intentionality, for example, and speech act theory is of course language, has powers and of course you can tell somebody to stand up and he may or may not choose to do so, he may or he may not choose to exercise his freedom. But suppose that you were to try to arouse the emotions via language. Try saying 'I surprise you' and surprising people, or 'I amaze you' and you do not amaze anybody. You say 'I frighten you', but you do not frighten anybody, so the whole area of emotional verbs in the language lie inert without a kind of roundabout way of summoning up speakers, listeners, context etc. My point is that other theories have expressed this with a great deal of sophistication. I gave you only one example, there may be many. For example Rorty said to me once that he was a walkover in the ontic, so how do you relate to theories like pragmatism, speech act theories, all these theories around you, which you seem to have eliminated in your own discourse.*

It is because of the way I was forced to present the remarks today that I was not able to re-engage the immanent critiques of the western traditions which were actually the launching pad for critical realism. Critical realism was an immanent critique of these different philosophies, epistemologies and so on. I have written many critical books

on the traditions to which you refer. I have written a book on Rorty called *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom*. And I am very familiar and respectful of these philosophers and their work but I would go much further than they do.

Is it just that you are going further or is it a matter of degree?

No I think there are lots of differences here. Let us take the emotions. It is very interesting that you said: 'I do not frighten you', 'I do not amaze you'. That is not the way to frighten someone, the way to frighten someone is to say 'shut up' or 'get lost'.

Of course we know this, my point is the resources of language are not creative in the way specified by the essentiality of words.

Why not look at the phenomenon of anger. You are in a state of angry consciousness.

Darwin does in great detail.

You are in a state of angry consciousness now. Suppose you have, as you do, the capacity to make that angry consciousness the object of your consciousness, you reflexively shift back your consciousness from the state you are in, your state of angry consciousness, to a state of consciousness of your angry consciousness, and you are no longer angry. Isn't that marvellous? You have within yourself the check which allows your emotions at the moment you are experiencing them to become objectified. Then because you have that power, you can also

begin to work on your emotions. Suppose you do not like it that you get so angry when a philosopher comes from abroad and you think he has not read Darwin. Supposing you want to become less angry—say when you meet a certain person. How do you begin to work on it? You will perhaps first of all ask what the causes of your anger are. If you were concerned to change say a disposition to behave in an angry way in a certain context, you would first have to get out of that anger. You cannot do it when you are in that anger.

Once you are out of that anger, which is a very interesting exercise itself, and not always very easy to do, once you are out of that anger—say in the way I have suggested, by the reflexive shift back of your consciousness from anger to consciousness of anger, a consciousness which is no longer angry but merely observing of the anger, an observing which (just try this) if undertaken without judgement will dissolve the anger—you then ask why you were angry. Perhaps there was something that you always wanted to express to a person, or in a particular context. Perhaps the lift up to the second floor makes you angry because it always gets stuck on the first floor. Perhaps then you begin to express and articulate what it is and then you can work on the causes. You may like to try to identify those causes by affirming the contrary and testing the resistances you meet. If you affirm 'I am a peaceful person', say affirming it by writing it down, again and again and again, then sooner or later you will find that you will spontaneously produce a response like this: 'no, I am at war, I am mad, I am mad at my mum', or whatever. There are lots of techniques for identifying the unconscious causes of the emotional states that you want to work on. When you have identified the causes of those states, then you have to work on those causes—understand your mother, understand your response, understand that the situation is no longer happening to you. Of course these are not easy things to do. No-one pretends that working on the emotions is easy.

Now on to your more general philosophical point. I believe that intentional states are causally explicable and causally efficacious. In general the traditions you are talking about do not share this belief. I believe that reasons are causes, I believe that causality is absolutely ubiquitous in the world. The emotions are a fascinating topic and much neglected in the world. Darwin of course had a great love and affection for human beings and animals, without which he could not have been the superb biologist that he was. That love and affection, I want to say, was actually (contingently) necessary for his scientific skills and achievements.

You said that action is spontaneous. We have all heard so much about this relationship between theory and practice. Do you think that this statement that action is spontaneous is itself a theory of action? What would be in your conception the relationship between theory and practice? Is theory something that only explains practice or does it precede it?

I think the notion of theory/practice consistency is the most important criterion that you can apply to any philosophical system. What I would say about critical realism is that it has shown how other philosophies on the existing menu are guilty of extraordinary performative contradiction. Let me give you the example of Rorty. In Part One of his book, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* he is committed to eliminative materialism. That is to the idea that ultimately there is nothing in being but the atoms and the void. In Part Three of the book he is committed to the idea of philosophy as conversational hermeneutics. How is Part Three consistent with Part One? How is conversational hermeneutics to be fitted into a theory of the atoms and the void? It cannot be. It cannot be, as conversational hermeneutics. For theories of atoms and the void know nothing about conversational hermeneutics;

and are invariant with respect to whether there is any conversational hermeneutics going on, and if so, what conversational hermeneutics. That is they are invariant to one rather than another conversational hermeneutics and therefore cannot capture or explain, let alone adequately describe or interpret, the particular (very specific, differential) conversational hermeneutics of some philosophical discourse. So what critical realism would do in this case is regard discourse as being an emergent stratum from a more basic level. But see that emergent stratum as being causally efficacious within it.

So reflexivity or theory/practice consistency is the most important criterion of philosophy. When Hume said that there are no grounds for going out the front door rather than the second floor window, then he was just saying that he is in a hopeless mess because he does not know why he does what he does. We were talking earlier about the extreme difficulty about getting this theory/practice consistency in one's social life, and in particular, the absence of organic intellectuals. This is a tremendous problem for the left and indeed for all who are concerned with emancipation. It raises the question of how you are to be truly consistent in your being. How you avoid substitutionism, how you avoid speaking for the masses, how you are of the masses and in the masses. There is only one level of being which can sustain this, and this is what I have called the alethic level, in which are all basically spontaneously, creative, loving etc., but concretely singular. When we speak from that standpoint we are speaking truly reflexively. But it is very difficult to get to.

I am somewhat mystified. You give us a theory of what you call the love and morality in human beings and this is a question: I wonder what you would call the basis of morality in human beings? (By the way there is also morality in animals). But we also have a lot of immorality and hatred and domination. So how do you explain that?

I think we are born into societies. I do not actually believe we are tabula rasas when we are born but as we grow up we become complex formations, ensembles of heteronomous forms of determination which we naively take in from society, or are otherwise socialised into. We understand for example that money is a very important, perhaps the most important, thing in our social life, so whenever we have a chance we are greedy, and then we have the emotion of greed or the state of greed. Greed becomes the driving force in desire. We are very pleased with our position in society, we come from a good family, our parents are kind and generous and have a big bank account so we grow up full of pride. These are all emotions that will get in the way of the expression and manifestation of our own spontaneous creativity, they will all stop us loving freely, being creative. The world of attachment, the world driven by desire for material goods, the world of commodification, the world of what the Vedic tradition called *maya*, or illusion, the world of practical ignorance, or *avidya*, that world is the world in which we live. It is far easier to go with that world than it is to step outside that world. My argument is that that world is only sustained by a world of non-duality which is its infrastructure, more than its support (and much more than a refuge or compensation), but its very basis and condition.

And you can verify this in your own experience. You can see how the most horrible situations actually presuppose love or creativity. And then you can ask, can we do this without the normatively negative. Can we do without exploitation, hatred, violence? The answer is yes, we can. We can survive in a world without capitalism. I will put it in the very simple terms of just one structure of oppression. We could survive without capitalism, capitalism could not survive without us. That is the basic asymmetry, but who dominates? Is it capitalism or is it us? Capitalism dominates. Does hatred or love dominate? Obviously hatred, but hatred could not survive without love, though

love would flourish without hatred. There is that asymmetry intrinsic to the stratification of reality, one of the themes of critical realism right from the start. There is that asymmetry which means that there is only one answer for humanity. The only answer for humanity is to get rid of exploitation, oppression, the heteronomous sources of determination, that is the only way we will survive. It is a bit like Krishna's argument in the *Bhaghavad Gita* to Arjuna: you have to understand that the body cannot survive without the soul but the soul can survive without the body, which is the more basic reality. All emancipation depends upon some such basic asymmetry; and in fact you will find the extraordinary thing is that emancipatory theories, taken to the deepest presuppositions, tend to converge on the properties of this most basic reality.

Conflict is also very creative. So in other words, we need love and hate

The creative tension is there when the war is between love and something which is not completely love, when the creativity of that tension rises, when you are working away to a resolution of a contradiction. Contradictions are very creative things. But the important thing to realise is that there can be growth, differentiation and development without that form of contradiction. This can be experienced subjectively as intense conflict, which is dualistic, oppositional strife. If contradiction specifies merely some absence and there is no constraint on a process of fulfilling that absence, then there is really no tension involved at all. Contradiction in the sense in which we ordinarily understand it relates to the tension experienced by blocks, constraints, a dualistic play of forces. Only if you cannot fulfil or remedy that absence, if you are prevented from doing so by something inside yourself

or your environment, is there contradiction properly speaking.

This leads to another point: I do not believe there ever will be such a thing as an end-state, in the sense of a state, here on earth, which is without room for further possible development. This is an important corrective to or qualification of what I have said before. I do not believe that, if we have a communist, Buddhist or Christian utopia, development would stop—because there will always be ways in which human beings can develop. So what I want to distinguish is two forms of incompleteness. Negative incompleteness is incompleteness marred by illusion, error, positive cruelty. Positive incompleteness is just an absence of total development. And the idea of total development actually involves, when you reflect on it, intrinsically the potentiality for further development. Total development in a harmonious way is development which is infinitely expandable. In fact in a communist utopia it would be truer to say not that development would stop, but for the first time real development would begin.

Thus to revert to the question of whether we can have a world without contradictions? Contradictions are at present the source, the motor of change. But is there a contradiction between an acorn and an oak? Not in the way in which there is a contradiction between an acorn and a hostile or inclement environment or habitat. Contradiction is not merely difference, contradiction is difference in the form of duality which constrains, impedes, blocks. Can we have a world without contradictions? Not now certainly because our world is replete with contradictions, and it is the contradiction between our desire, our will to do without contradictions and the contradictory world in which we live that will ultimately produce a world without contradiction.

Supposing you have mastered every field of enquiry or discipline, except book-binding, and you suddenly found yourself wanting to bind a book. There would be a contradiction then between your desire and your abilities

but actually your desire is an irrational one. Your desire should be to learn book-binding, not to bind a book, and if there is no constraint on learning book-binding, there is no contradiction involved at all. Of course there may be choice and decision—whether to spend the time and energy on learning book-binding rather than acquiring some other new knowledge or skill. But we can be free of contradictions within the constraints imposed by the fundamental parameters of our physical world, we can be unlimited, unbounded beings, non-dual beings within the limits imposed by our physicality. The sense in which contradiction is inevitable is merely the sense in which whatever we do in this world will always involve some kind of choice and will always be constrained by the laws that constitute its physicality, which impose a limit to such things as the immediate satisfaction of desires. But when we master the art of becoming an unlimited, non-dual being within this world, then we will have come to see that the contradiction lies in the desire form itself, not the conditions of action, including the inertia, parameters and laws imposed by our physical environment, i.e. in the world within which we must act.

It is the desire form itself which prevents and limits our freedom, not the constraints on the satisfaction of our desires, and when we see that it is the desire itself that imposes the constraint, not our environment, then there is nothing more in the physical world which is constraining. There are no constraints without desires. The tension produced by the couple desire—constraint can only be resolved one way and the way it is resolved is by relinquishing desire, which relinquishes or frees us simultaneously from constraints, for these constraints are only on our desires, not on our capacity to be free, loving, creative and joyous beings in the world. They are not even constraints on our intentionality, for our intentionality will naturally manifest itself in a way which is appropriate to us, in the specificity of our ground-state, in the total context of our global environment (which

extended far enough is the cosmic envelope). The world is a constraint on our desires, but our desires are the constraint we impose on ourselves, i.e. on our being ourselves, that is to say free or fulfilled. To be free, to be liberated from desire is to be at once liberated from constraint and to be capable of living a fulfilled life within the world as it is constituted now.

Underpinning this mistake is a very basic misunderstanding. We think that to be free in the sense of non-dual beings is in some way to be without differentiation, development and growth, but why do we think this? We have a model of non-duality as a point, a nothingness, but non-duality can be identification with a differentiated field. We lose ourselves in a picture, that picture is a whole, we become one with the whole, not some imaginary point in it. At the same time we, in our innermost beings, are wholes, totalities, concretely singularised and differentiated fields. We grow and develop by in-building further differentiation and development, embedding it non-dualistically as an expansion of that highly differentiated and developed field that we already are. This is the transcendental constitution of our ground-state. As we embed further development or new skills, we remain non-dual beings, even in the very process of acquiring them, embedding the new growth and development, nesting it within the expanding totality that we already are.

Thus in giving up desires we give up constraints but we do not give up growth and development. Rather, we give up that which blocks and generates the constraints on it. Ultimately the only way to live is indeed without contradictions; then and only then will true harmonious development be experienced. There will still be lots of ways in which we can acquire more skills, eliminate more positive incompleteness, fill more lacunae—a potentially ever-growing totality—but those lacunae are not experienced as constraints. They merely indicate the way, coming from the ground-state, that we wish to develop and grow, in the world as it is actually constituted, in a process which has no foreseeable end.

There is actually a very pernicious model here, a model on which we cannot see development without block, duality, opposition, strife. But we know that the child develops a language naturally, spontaneously, in an unforced way in an environment in which people speak and employ linguistic modes of behaving. We know that the oppression of the factory floor or the domestic drudgery or the war is not necessary for the expression of our creativity, our love and the enjoyment and fulfilment of our powers of being in the world. The biggest constraint on our freedom and fulfilment is to think that constraint lies in the world; it is we who project and impose the constraints on the world, in virtue of the constraints we have within ourselves. These constraints are constraints on the fulfilment of our inner potential to grow in a natural, unforced way, without desire, greed, pride, anger, hate; mental fixation; physical inertia etc. To become unconstrained we have only to relinquish our desires, for it is these which impose constraints on our being at one, at peace, at home in the world—wherever we are and however it is.

I understand your critique of post-modernism but I am not able to interrelate capitalism with modernism. Perhaps you could just say briefly what is the relationship between capitalism and modernism?

Simply put, I think modernism is a very pure ideology of the capitalist mode of production.

Postscript*

If, in our world, non-dual action we can't avoid, non-dual beings we can become. A (temporal and/or spatio-temporal) gap between intention and fulfilment is characteristic of earthly existence. One always has to wait before an intention is realised, except in the case of the most basic actions. This makes it all the more important to distinguish between (*a*) intention and (*b*) desire. Intention (without desire) is, or can be, part of one's innermost being, basically and ultimately one's *dharma*; and, as such, intentionality just flows into or manifests in action which neither clings nor binds the agent to the results or consequences of his or her action. Desire, on the other hand, clings, splitting or unfulfilling our intentionality, constituting something heteronomous within our embodied personality, which blocks or thwarts the intentionality which would otherwise flow from our ground-states, binding the individual and entailing karma. If you have no desires, there is nothing to constrain you. And if you have no constraints there is nothing to stop you being (or becoming) what you essentially are; that is acting as a free being or agent in the world. The features of the social and natural (including organic, physical) world will not be experienced as constraints but as the conditions, situation and context of your action, imposing in fact its determinacy on it. As conditions, they are the means and determine the manner in which you objectify yourself in action, as a materially embodied being, in the physical world around you.

* Chennai, January 2002.

You manifest the absolute within the field of relativity, a contrast that can be usefully compared with the one Hegel made between absolute and relative ethical life. The field of relativity, as so understood, contains of course everything that we have described as four-planar social being, including conventions, laws, moralities, etc.; but also the physical parameters and conditions under which, as physically embodied beings, we must act in the physical world. It is impossible to avoid non-dual action in the world as it is constituted, because we are endowed as physically distinct and separate beings and we have the capacities to think and speak reflexively, making some situation or thought the object of our awareness or attention, which inevitably involves non-dual action. However, we can certainly become non-dual beings in such a world.

Let us consider how this happens. The most basic misunderstanding at work here is the assumption that non-duality or transcendental identification or unity involves the absence of differentiation or development, that it is somehow characterless. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing follows from the fact that typically in non dual states you cannot describe that non-dual state while being in it—that the most poignant expression of it may be the 'aaah!' or 'oh!' or perhaps just gesturing or pointing, or identifying a simile, metaphor or analogue of it, such as a rose, symbolic of the completion, perfection or fulfilment of that moment of non-duality—since when you make that non-dual state the object of your discourse, you are in the dualistic state of describing it, not the non-duality you are describing.

A very related mistake is the assumption that identity must be punctiform or atomistic and unity undifferentiated. This is very far from being the case, though its roots in empiricist ideology of science (and beneath that, the foundational structures of the world of duality) are not difficult to discern. You can be at one, in a state of transcendental unity or identity with a holistic field, such as a picture or a piece of music.

Indeed anything that you are in transcendental identity with will be differentiated and holistic. At the same time you, as a transcendentally real self, are a differentiated, developing field. As you acquire new skills, you learn new capacities, in-building

them into yourself. You recursively embed these skills as part of your innermost being, within your transcendentally real self. You do not have to experience a contradictory existence or mode of being, even though you will employ of necessity dualistic thought and action. Everything, we might say, is unified by the divine ingredient within you, which you essentially are. Of course as long as there remains negative incompleteness in the world, as long as heteronomy (and not just opportunity) exists, you will have to employ modes of behaviour which are not only non-dual, but themselves contradictory, conflictual, antagonistic and so forth. That is to say you will have to act in a conflictual way, so as to undermine and eliminate, that is struggle against, the heteronomy and constraints on self-realisation in the world.

We must thus distinguish three distinct things:

- *non dual being;*
- *non-oppositional dual activity, e.g. the activity employed to acquire new skills, explore new possibilities for development, a process which will inevitably necessitate or presuppose choice, take time, involve non-spontaneity, discursive thought, etc., but which is not inevitably implicated in conflict or contradiction;*
- *oppositional dual activity in the world.*

Of course, as physically embodied in the world, your physical embodiment will inevitably mean that you will suffer and experience pain, and other sensations characteristic of physical being; and these may be very difficult on occasions for you to incorporate within your own transcendental unity, that is, not to see as constraints within and upon your own being, but we must strive not to see them as such.

The two phases of the dialectic of liberation which I have called the elimination of negative and positive incompleteness[5]

[5] This is not quite the same as the difference between shedding and embodiment, because the embodiment or filling of the cleared space must proceed in tandem with the clearing, as argued above. That is to say although shedding is logically prior it is not chronologically distinct.

can also be connected with a tripartite distinction one needs to make between

one's embodied personality;
one's psychic being; and
one's ground-state

The first stage of this dialectic involves not only the shedding of heteronomy within the embodied personality, but the elimination of those consequences of unfulfilled or split intentionality, retained within the psychic being, and characteristically known as karma, which may persist over a succession of lives. The second phase of the dialectic of liberation is the alignment of the embodied personality and the psychic being with the ground-state, so that this is realised, manifest or actualised in the totality of your embodied personality, a process (or so I have argued) without a foreseeable end. At this point your psychic being is at one with your embodied personality, that is, there are no residual, unexperienced and/or uncleared elements of heteronomy, and the task is merely to manifest ground-state qualities in the totality of one's activity. Typically one might want to associate the psychic being with what is normally called the 'soul' or 'anima' and then the ground-state would be the *jivatman* or concretely singularised spirit. In the postscript to Chapter Four I shall explore the way in which if transcendental identification and transcendence generally is an everyday feature of the lives of all embodied personalities, and co-presence is particularly associated with the ground-state, then the psychic being is that which typically experiences, retains or stores, and awakens or activates modes of what I have called reciprocity.

Chapter Two

Who Am I?*

As a brief résumé of the talk to come the participants were given a handout, which has been slightly expanded and edited here, before the meeting started.

The nature of the self has been a perplexing topic for philosophical, religious, social, psychological and literary thought—in pre-modern, modern and post-modern times. The empiricist philosopher David Hume claimed that when he examined it, he found that it disappeared. Post-modernists say pretty much the same thing. So what is it that disappears? And who remains to announce the disappearance? Classically Buddhism is associated with a 'no-self' doctrine. So what is it then that reincarnates and is subject to karma; or shows the virtue of the Arhat or the compassion of the Bodhisattva? Vedic philosophy posits the Self as the basic principle of reality—but is the Self one (as Shankara held) or many or both (existing, as a *jivatman*, as different aspects of the *paramatman*?). Moreover 'I' is a 'shifter': it is both a universal applying indifferently to any being who utters it; and a particular designating one and only one individual. However, even as a particular it shifts, varying from context to context and over time. Thus in some

* Bangla Academy Hall, Kolkata, September 2001.

contexts 'I' am contrasted with my emotional states; in others 'I' am contrasted with my possessions; in others with my background or formation, in still others 'I' will be taken to include all of these things and more. Perhaps the best known attempt in the 20th century to conceptualise this feature of the self is the contrast between 'I' and 'me', initially formulated by Meade, with the 'me' either standing for what is an object of thought or discourse, presumably of an 'I'; or as what is determined, constituted, constrained by others as distinct from the 'I' which remains free.

The source of the paradoxical nature of the self is as follows: whatever it is that is said about the self, there is something other than that which is said which is tacitly presupposed. Thus if I say that the self does not—or for that matter does—exist I presuppose something else which asserts the non-existence or existence of that which I talk about. In the philosophical discourse of modernity, modernism and modernisation we have characteristically, powered by individualism, an ego and anthropo-centricity coupled on to an abstract universality. In post-modernism this couple is rejected and displaced, but the bearer of the deconstructive discourse remains mysterious, unsusceptible to reflexive situation.

Whatever the self is, it is clearly very important in contemporary society, being the bearer of legal, social and religious rights and responsibilities. It is 'I' who comes of age and marries, possesses and owns, votes and talks, loves and fights, is punished and rewarded, becomes ill and dies—an event which 'I' either do or do not survive (and, if 'I' do, experience 'afterlife' of some or other religious description). We live indeed in a very *egocentric* world, curiously coupled with its abstract universality.

Here I argue that the self in the sense of the *ego*, separated from other selves and a world of objects (including emotional states) to which it is attached, is a 'causally efficacious' illusion. As (emergent) *embodied personalities* we do, however, exist; but our existence is both dependent and limited. On the other hand, everything we do depends upon a transcendentally *real Self*, in essence unlimited, which is the ultimate source

of our causal agency *in* the world. Moreover, all projects of human emancipation tacitly suppose such a self. This 'Self' has no sense of self (and does not even talk or even think about itself), but *uniquely* displays itself in the here and now of (spontaneous, loving) *creation*.

Thus the 'I' in the sense of 'ego', that 'I' which apprehends itself as existing separately from other 'I's' and asserts itself against an object world, both of which may be regarded as a field for the ego's play and manipulation, that 'I' is an illusion in the sense that it has no real object; just as a mirage is an illusion. But though an illusion, it is like a mirage, causally efficacious, and as such is real, that is, the illusion is real, though it remains an illusion, i.e. has no real object. This is what I have called *'demi-reality'*. This 'I', this little self, is, however, a property of real (non-illusory) *embodied personalities*. These are complex, relationally defined and constituted entities, themselves stratified, differentiated and changing—constituents of what I have called *relative reality*. Underneath such embodied personalities is a *transcendentally real* Self which is the source of their causal agency and powers, and such selves are unlimited and absolute realities. Thus what we think we are is a mixture of an illusory ego, a real but limited embodied personality (itself stratified, and itself constituted at the very least by mental, emotional and physical properties), and an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real being, for the most part occluded and dominated by the realities which depend on it.

In developing our potentialities and powers, we reach a point at which we realise that it is necessary to shed our sense of ego, our sense of separateness from things in the world, alongside all other illusory and heteronomous sources of determination. In shedding our sense of separateness from the rest of being, our embodied personalities expand rather than contract; so that we become more free, fulfilled and more realised unlimited selves. We gradually become only and essentially what we really are; but this becoming is in principle itself infinite and unlimited and has no foreseeable end. When we shed our ego, and the emotions so closely associated with it such as pride, fear, jealousy or greed (all of which may in

some circumstances play a positive and necessary role), we open out an infinite path in which we can become ever more fully what we always were and essentially are, without being also what we are essentially not.

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Welcome to you all to this evening with Roy Bhaskar. Most of you know, probably more than I know, about Roy through his works and so Roy needs no introduction at all, but for those of you who are coming to know him he is the creator of an interdisciplinary and international movement called critical realism. His book, *A Realist Theory of Science*, which was published in 1975, changed the whole scene, the whole academic scene. Our understanding of science would never be the same since the publication of Roy's glorious theory of science. He has released us from Humean bondage. We welcome Roy today and we are very happy to have another realist amongst us, my teacher, Professor Chhanda Gupta, who has kindly agreed to chair this session. I would like to request Chhandaji to start the proceedings, please. Thank you.

Professor Bhaskar. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm very happy to be here this evening to listen to a lecture on a very exciting theme by a world renowned philosopher, Professor Roy Bhaskar, who started this independent critical realist movement about which you have just heard. This theme, 'Who am I?', has intrigued and exercised thinkers of all times and well even laymen would often ask this question, Who am I? In philosophy this theme has usually been construed as the problem of personal identity or as the problem of the Nature of the Self. So the title, which has been so succinctly phrased by Roy, can be amplified and the question may be read as, Am I a person consisting of body and a mind, having a unity, a persistent identity? Or are we to accept Humean strictures, which Roy writes about, that because this unity and identity cannot be found in fleeting thoughts and feelings, the self is

to be dismissed straightaway, so ending with scepticism about the intuitive 'I'. Professor Bhaskar straightaway repudiates Humean scepticism, asserts the existence of embodied personalities as the text of the handout says. But we are not only that, he argues, there is a larger self, a transcendentally real self which has to be presupposed if we have to make sense of whatever we do. Whatever we do must absolutely depend on this transcendentally real self. I would expect, and possibly those who are familiar with his work would also expect, some kind of light being thrown on his philosophy of Self, I mean, your philosophy of Self, transcendental philosophy of self, and the relation it has to a larger view of yours which is transcendental realism, a major, integral part of your critical realism. Thank you.

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Thank you both very much for these very kind words of introduction. It's a pleasure to be here with you all. I'll try to keep my talk as informal and as relatively brief as possible.

If you think about it, the question 'Who Am I?' is a very basic one. It's also been a perplexing one in pre-modern, modern and post-modernist times. It's been perplexing in the east, the west, indeed everywhere (even I guess in the South Atlantic!). But it's not only perplexing. Because when you think about it, you cannot not act and everything you do, you and only you do, every change you effect in the world is something which you do, and yet who is this, this doer, this agent who you call 'I'. So the question here has a vitalness about it. For actually everything you do, you're doing as a self in some way or other. In fact since all questions then really are questions of agency, to do with agency, your agency revolves around answering that question – the question 'who am I?' in some kind of way. This is so even in the case of purely theoretical questions about beliefs. The question, 'what, if anything, should I believe about X', is also a question about <u>you</u>,

about what, if anything, you should believe, what if anything you should do.

So let me just say immediately what the basic difficulty with this question is, and that is that if you ask it, whatever is said in response to the question, 'Who am I?' or 'What is the nature of the Self?', something else is always presupposed by the sayer. Thus when David Hume, who, after a not very long search (so typical of Hume), discovered that he could not find the self (himself), who was it that announced that he, or the self, did not exist: who was it who announced that? So what is that 'I', this 'I', which is always presupposed?

Let me put a bit of philosophical substance on this question. Now look at the classical discourse of modernity. Let's say modernism is compounded of three things. It is compounded of the philosophical discourse of western modernity; then the tradition of high-modernism; and, in India in particular, the philosophy and ideology of modernisation. Now modernism in this sense revolves around a couple: on the one hand, an individual human being, tacitly gendered as a man; and, on the other, abstract universality. So this is the dominant core in the discourse of modernism. The isolated, atomistic individual and abstract actualist universality. This individual when he is pared down turns out to be an *ego*. And the abstract universality turns out to be a false Humean sort of universality—a kind of endless repetition of the same.

There is a funny thing about the terms of this couple: neither actually exist. If you look for abstract universals, you will find them nowhere actually existing, neither in nature, nor in society. And if you search for the ego, you can't really find it. This has been tried over and over again and the ego just dissolves away into non-existence. So the classical discourse of modernity is based on a very false couple. Reacting against this, we have post-modernism. But if post-modernism rejects the ego, then the question is, what is the status of post-modernist discourse itself? What is it, who is it, that is doing the rejection?

So, on the one hand, it seems almost impossible to avoid some sort of positive analysis of the self. And on the other, if you reject the abstract universality of classical modernism and

you want to stress, as post-modernists do, identity and difference, then you also have to ask, isn't there something that connects us all as human beings? Can't we have a conception of universality which allows for differentiation, mediation, geo-historical trajectory and uniqueness? Can't we have that kind of conception of universality which doesn't violate the universality of all being, and still affirms the common humanity or unity of all human beings—something that we all share as human beings despite our differences, our specific identities. So post-modernist discourse is really faced with two huge problems. There doesn't seem to be a point of reference for the discourse itself and the baby of unity or universality is thrown out with the abstract, undialectical bathwater, the uniformity and homogeneity. So this is really the central polarising, constitutive couple, the over-arching duality, a duality which tenses into a dualism, of western thought: the individual, ego or homunculus, the more or less punctual, atomistic tacitly gendered man and complete uniformity, abstract universality, the actualist constant conjunction of the same. And the shocking thing is that both terms of this couple are completely false, and indeed rationally groundless.[1]

Now it's quite easy I think to show that this couple is incoherent. But let me just talk a little bit at a pre-analytical, pre-philosophical level about its constitution. If you say 'I', it is equally true that you, and he, and she and indeed anyone can say 'I'; that is, 'I' is a universal. 'I' doesn't uniquely pick out you or me or anyone else; and the fact that anyone can say 'I' means that the word 'I' is what is technically known as a shifter. It shifts its reference and everything else, all its connotations, depending on who speaks it. Similarly it shifts in the case of any one speaker from context to context and over time. Thus

[1] It should be said here that if critical realism has oriented its critique primarily to the objective side of the couple, I did point out in my earliest work, *A Realist Theory of Science* [pp. 198 and 262] that the clue to the definition of this couple lay in the underlying model of man, that the abstract universality presupposed; and the whole ideological structure had a *subjective* point and rationale. It is the critique of that subjective side which is being pursued here.

a person will typically contrast or counterpose the 'I' which they are to different parts of what could be called their penumbra: at one time to their partner, at another to their emotions, at another their material possessions (such as fridges and cars). On other occasions they might oppose it to other individuals, or to animals, or other species; yet again many will include their pets as part of what they are. So it is not clear that it has any stable or unique referent, even for any single human being. And of course human beings are themselves in transition, in motion. So whatever 'I' uses it to refer to himself is highly variable, very unstable and changing. This 'I' then shifts enormously according to who is doing the talking; the context in which they are talking; and whereabouts in their life trajectory they are.

So it's really a huge question that we are addressing here. It's a question which is made even more pregnant when you think that everything in our society presupposes or turns on it. For it is 'I', it is the individual self who is the bearer of legal, economic and social rights. It's also 'I' who's blamed, it's 'I' who loves, it's 'I' who dies. 'I' bear responsibility according to religious traditions, for my acts in this life, whose consequences 'I' suffer or enjoy in heaven or hell, or a subsequent life or lives. This 'I' is an extraordinary thing...everything else in our society actually hinges on it. So it's not just a philosophical teaser. We all assume that everyone knows what the self is, who I am, who is responsible for what. But if you can't give a coherent account of it, then you can't give a coherent account of anything you do, and ultimately a coherent account of anything at all.

Now if you look at it, if you try to ask where you begin and where you end, then the answer is very, very difficult; is your determination, your circumstances part of your identity, or not? Would you include your family, your background as part of you? Certainly you want to blame it if you are held accountable for something of which society disapproves. You want to say, it wasn't just me you know, it's something else, some other thing, being or circumstances outside myself which caused me to do it. How would you begin to tell where exactly

you began and where you ended? It might be clearer in a particular case: for example, if you owned a car which crashed and you survived or were not even driving the car, then you might regard yourself as being distinct from the car; or, you might not: the car might remain with you, insofar as you were attached to it, you might grieve for the car, and carry that grief with you. When your dog dies, then a large part of you dies, though in a way it does so only because your bond or attachment to the dog remains. When you lose your parents or your partner, then a large part of you goes. Some people deplore or resent their genes—and they may be right to do so; for surely it is clear that we can be imprisoned and constrained by our genetic endowment, and also in a way seek to, successfully, transcend it. So it's not at all clear where we begin and where we end.

It would be nice to go into some of these issues in much more detail. Before that is possible, however, we need to clarity the conceptual terrain. Basically we need to differenti ate three concepts: the concepts of the ego, the embodied personality and the transcendentally real self.

There is a concept of ego which is a sense of self, an 'I' which is distinct from all the other 'I's' and from the world of objects in which it is suspended and to which it is more or less attached. These objects it possesses or desires or wants. And this 'I' is subject to predication, is distinct from everything else. Now this 'I', this ego is an illusion, it's not real.

That 'I' does not exist . That doesn't mean that the illusion isn't itself real. To say something is an illusion is to say that it has no object, so that ego doesn't refer or correspond or reflect or pick out anything in the world. However, as an illusion it certainly is a real, causally efficacious feature, a real part of the furniture of the world. People have the sense of ego, the sense of their own self-identity, their separateness from other beings to which they are opposed, and from a point of view of their opposition form various more or less close attachments, or defining their opposition more precisely, aversions, and which then subsequently motivates their behaviour. That sense of their separate identity, the ego, causes

them to do some things rather than others. So it's real. The ego then in this sense is what I have called a 'demi-real'. It is real in the sense of being causally efficacious; but demi-real in the sense that it doesn't have a real object.

To move on now to the embodied personality. Let us take the Bengali personality. Bengali personalities are real and Nirmalya is real in the way in which egos are not. That is, it would be silly of me to deny that the Nirmalya there was a real embodied Bengali personality in some way, really existing in some more or less definite way. But actually what constitutes him as an embodied personality, or Bengalis as embodied personalities, are complex questions. What we can definitely say is that though Bengali personalities are real, they are relative, they are limited, they are bounded and everything we say about them is more or less perspectival, and perspectivally variable. It depends on our point of view—what chunk, if you like, what slice of that personality we're interested in. So this sense of 'I' is a very limited or relative notion.

Now beneath that embodied personality (and this is my argument) there is the essential, transcendentally real self, which is not separate from other selves or other things; which is in fact continuous with and connected to all other selves and other things generally and indeed to all of creation. This is the transcendentally real self, and this is the self, the 'I' of causal agency.

It's at this level that things happen in the world. So this deep essential self which I've also called our alethic self, that is our true real self. This real self is connected with everything else in the world. It is the source of our energy, creativity and intelligence; our love, joy and freedom; our spontaneity, unconditionality and agency. Nevertheless it is concrete and singularised. It is a particular; and just as we have unique personalities, everyone is different in their innermost being. That is the rough sketch of the argument.

The key concepts I would like to put forward in place of the punctual, atomistic human being and the abstract universal world, the key concepts at the philosophical level are those of Concrete Singularity and Dialectical Universality. Then, the

concrete singular embodies a universal component but also specific mediations, its own unique geo-historical trajectory and it's irreducibility, it's uniqueness. That concrete singular goes along with dialectical universalisability. Every universal you find in the world is actually mediated or differentiated in any concrete case. It also always has a specific geo-historic trajectory. And it's also always instantiated in some uniquely particular way. Let's just take very simple examples of this, philosophically. The Humean theory of causality says the world is constituted by constant conjunctions of atomistic events, empirical regularities which everywhere prevail, which are spontaneously generated by nature. This just isn't true.

There is no statement which is universal and empirical. All the empirical regularities we have, all the constant conjunctions known to science, have been generated under artificially closed conditions. Construed as empirical regularities they break down outside those closed conditions. The laws of science specify the tendencies of structures which operate independently of the actual patterns of events. The law of gravity is indeed universal at least within our range of being. But it doesn't imply anything in particular about whether I am falling to the ground or not. If the law of gravity is construed as all heavy bodies fall to the ground, then it is immediately contravened by what's happening here. I'm heavy, I'm a body, but I'm not falling. It's only under the artificially experimental closed conditions of the laboratory that you can bring a law of nature into one-to-one correspondence with an empirical result and in this way test or identify the rule. So there is a huge role for experience, the empirical, the experimental in science, that is, it is as a special mode of identifying the way in which true universality operates in nature, which is behind the surface of events which it governs and co-determines.

Let us move from epistemology to ethics. Take a theory like the Kantian Categorial Imperative. This would have us believe that we test the rightness or wrongness of action by seeing whether we can subsume it under a universal maxim. But what does this imply about lying? Is lying right or is it wrong? Well, of course sometimes it is right and sometimes it

is wrong. We have the concept of a white lie. Sometimes it is right to tell a lie. It is not always wrong. So all the universals we have in ethics, just as in science and everyday life, are always mediated, always differentiated and always specific to speaker and hearer and the relationship and context between them. Supposing, someone said that all human beings are between 5 and 6 feet tall. That would be silly, wouldn't it? Some, probably most, are, but many are not. If someone said that all watchstraps are white, that would be equally silly. Every universal that we have is always differentiated, mediated and geo-historicised; it is always concretely singularised. Conversely, everything and every event, every singular, is always an instantiation of some more or less complex, differentiated and geo-historically trajectorised universal. So the ordinary concepts of individuality and universality we are working with are very crude, far too crude to make headway in understanding questions of the nature of the self, personal identity, etc. Similarly with our ordinary concepts with thing, event and so on.

Supposing I asked you how many events are going on here, wouldn't that be meaningless, or 'how many things are there on this table?' Questions such as these just don't make any sense. So if you are asked something like 'Who am I' or 'who (or what) is the self', with our existing unreconstructed ontology we will make very little headway. You have to first do a lot of work on the concepts and presuppositions embedded in such questions.

What I want to delve into here will be in the context of critical realism, particularly in its dialectical form. This tries to understand or to look at things in a new way, that is from the point of view of *thinking being*. And the single most important philosophical move that characterises critical realism is the re-thematisation of ontology, and its irreducibility. This is what I have called the first moment of the system of dialectical critical realism. The second moment or edge is to think this being we have re-thematised and revindicated as negative, not merely positive. We think in terms of categories of absence, of change, of process. The third moment or level

within critical realism after thinking being, and thinking being negatively, is thinking being as a totality or as a whole; that is operating in terms of concepts of internal as well as external relationality, intra-activity as well as inter-activity, in terms of holistic causality, and of the dialectical interconnectedness of things. The fourth moment, level or dimension of critical realism reflects our aspiration to think of being in terms also of transformative agency, in terms of human praxis or creative work; and to think being reflexively in terms of the potentiality of praxis conforming to the unity of theory and practice, that is to there not being a performative contradiction between what a person does and what he says. Those are some of the features of critical realism. Let us ask what light they can cast on the analysis of the self?

First we are just thinking being, the first moment of critical realism, ontology. Now it's easy enough, isn't it, to see that ontology has got to be irreducible. Supposing you are talking to a post-modernist and the post-modernist says that there is no need for a conception of reality, that a conception of discourse is sufficient. Then just say to the post-modernist, 'Would you mind repeating that'. And he says again you don't need a conception of reality. And then you say to him: is that, is what you're saying real or not? If he says it's real, then discourse is real, that is the thin edge of the wedge, at least one item is real. If he says it's not real, then you just turn your cheek, because if what he said is not real, it can't have any causal impact on you, and it must be a subjective illusion. So really it's pretty easy to see that a denial of reality is contradictory.

But the taboo on reality is very deep within western philosophy. Kant renounced it very explicitly. The first step within critical realism is to say that we can't do without ontology. This involves the repudiation of what I call the epistemic fallacy, i.e. the fallacy of reducing being to knowing. For what that actually does in an underhand, roundabout way is to give the stamp or imprint of being to a claim to knowing of being.

Because, on it there is no distinction, no reality against which you can test your knowledge. Because there are only beliefs, knowledge, language, descriptions, you cannot refer to anything

outside beliefs, the network. You can't talk in philosophy about what those beliefs, that network describes or attempts to capture, so that you don't have any room to critically assess or to think the possibility of a discourse which will allow you to critically evaluate our current claims to knowledge. So that, if you like, is its ideological function. But at the philosophical level, you can't avoid ontology; and what that meant was that a specific untheorised ontology was tacitly presupposed, implicitly imbibed or secreted into the structure of epistemology. You can see this very clearly if you take a radical theorist like Habermas, who has a theory of knowledge, but not of being. He allows that certainly we have a knowledge-constitutive interest in nature, in the guise of an interest in prediction and control. So what is this? This interest in nature is exactly that defined by the Popper Hempel theory of explanation; that is the theory that to explain an event is the same as to predict it and that is to subsume it under a universal empirical generalisation. And that of course presupposes precisely the same Humean theory of causal laws, involving the ontology of the endless repetition of the same.

Indeed that unstructured, undifferentiated, unchanging ontology was actually tacitly presupposed by the whole of contemporary epistemology and philosophy of science. What critical realism did was two things. In the very first move it said both that ontology was irreducible (and that the taboo on it was wrong) and that the implicit ontology of contemporary philosophy was totally false, that the world was not as had tacitly been presupposed, but that it is really structured, differentiated and changing. Suddenly structure, differentiation and change and everything that depends upon them becomes possible.

You know the Humean ontology, just think of it. Nothing new ever happens, it is an endless repetition of the same, whereas we know that everything around us revolves around novelty. In fact there is no genuine human act which isn't a production of something new. Human agency always involves absenting something that is given, presenting something new. So this was a completely false ontology that western philosophy of science had tacitly presupposed.

Now the next step within critical realism was to see that although ontology is a proper subject and can't be reduced to epistemology – so that we have a distinction between knowledge and being – to leave it at that would be to split reality into two. Knowledge is also part of being.

Then we have to have a conception of being which includes knowledge. So it's not just that knowledge is distinct from it's object, but being itself, that is the subject of ontology, also encompasses epistemology. And then when you think about it, being, the subject matter of ontology, includes everything. It includes errors, it includes categories, it includes contradictions. They are all part of being. And as I argued in relation to my preliminary remark about the ego, it includes illusions. These too are part of being. So category mistakes and philosophical errors generally are part of being. If category mistakes are a part of being then we have to accept the implications of categorial realism that the categories themselves are part of being. Categories, like causality and law, are not subjective schematisms or classifications which we impose on the world. Rather, categories like causality and law are also in the world themselves.

So it's not just that the world contains countless laws like Boyle's law, Ohm's law, and so on; it contains lawfulness as such. Lawfulness is a real feature of being. And the categories (and category mistakes), the traditional subject matter of philosophy, is part of being. So philosophical error and philosophical truth will play roles in being. And you can understand then the emancipatory role that someone like the Buddha can play, when he argued that we suffer under certain illusions about the nature of reality, that we got its categorial structure wrong. We sought our joy and happiness in transient things. We became attached (and averse) to such things. We craved, suffered and returned to fulfil our craving because we misunderstood the nature of reality.

And then you can make sense of radical philosophies and all philosophical change. After all, what is the philosopher trying to do? He's trying to give a better account of something real. And he's assuming that an account of something real can

actually inform your behaviour. What happens if you are operating under a false belief? Then your behaviour is straightaway going to be wrong, isn't it? It is going to be erroneous in some way. So philosophy has an emancipatory role to play. If you realise this, and if you think you are an agent, if you think you have freedom, in some respect then you are going to be a different being from someone who thinks that he does not, that he is governed by instinct or behaves like a machine. So if you think or act as if the world has one rather than another categorial structure or formation then this will clearly affect the way you think, act and are.

Therefore philosophy has a new, very important role. This categorial realism is an important feature of critical realism and important for philosophical reflexivity—otherwise we can't understand what it is that we are doing. And it is essential also to make sense of the activity of great philosophers or even ordinary philosophers, because on this account, very ordinary, mundane philosophers who are merely replicating the conventional, orthodox received wisdom are actually playing a role in reality. Of course it's normally or very often what you might call a reactionary, a non-progressive, a not very happy role. What happens if you have a false theory of reality and you are trying to apply it in a real world? Well, it's going to go wrong in some way. What happens if you are say, an experimental scientist and you accept or discover a law and you go out of the laboratory with a Humean or empirical invariance account of that law, then outside the laboratory you will act as if the world was as the transcendental realist described. You will *act* as if the laws of nature behaved independently, irrespective of the closure or otherwise of the systems in which they occur. You will *act* as if the law of gravity applied irrespective of whether a bridge collapsed or not. Such laws transfactually describe the invariant structures of things independently of what happens. So you will be working with that kind of complex formation which I have earlier called a TINA formation. TINA just means: There Is No Alternative. And a TINA formation is something which is half true and half false; a truth in practice combined or held in tension with

a falsity in theory. In such a mode of being and acting you will be working with the truth as a necessary presupposition of the falsity which you believe and would seek to practice.

What you believe may be false but to make it work you have to presuppose at least some element of what is true. That is why a pure empiricist has to be of course a realist, so he is an empirical realist. In practice he has to combine empirical and transcendental realism or critical realism. He has to assume that regularity, that order in the world is pitched at the level of structures. But in his thought he continues to believe that it is pitched to the level of events. So he is inconsistent, combining falsity and truth in a peculiar way, necessitated by the fact that the necessary condition of the falsity is the tacit presupposition of the truth. TINA, then, is very important if we are to understand the nature of critical thought in all emancipatory discourses.

What happens if you are trying to change the world, to empower self-emancipation, is that you say something like Rousseau said: man is born free but is everywhere in chains. That means man is essentially free, but he's also a lot of other things. He incorporates within himself all the heteronomous, oppressive, instrumental, manipulative structures of society, including internalised, psychological, heteronomous, i.e. non-free, determinations. Similarly, Chomsky says we have at birth the innate capacity to generate an infinite number of sentences, sentences which we have never uttered, or even dreamt of uttering. But most people don't generate that many, let alone any new, sentences at all. Their freedom, stemming from this innate capacity, is in this way stifled. Marx said that everything really turns on human creativity, based on human labour power. According to Marx the workers are exploited, their creativity is what actually sustains the extraction of surplus value, which is the mechanism that makes capitalism tick. I am not saying that Marx's theory is necessarily true, merely using it to illustrate the structure of its critique and role in emancipatory thought and practice. Similarly, the Vedic critique of *maya* or illusion says that underneath the world of illusion it identifies there is a world of Self or spirit, there's a

reality there which if only we could access and tap would enable us to get rid of this maya and we would be free. We would be one with the transcendent.

This move actually delineates the essential structure of all liberatory thought. All emancipatory thought has to presuppose in some way the actuality, the inherent existence (albeit in an unfulfilled state) *now*, of what could be. What the structure of emancipatory thought says is that we are free, creative, loving; we are essentially good, noble, dignified, productive beings. But we are not only that. We contain or sustain a lot else besides. And the dialectic of liberation is to get rid of everything which is inconsistent with, that is blocks or constrains, what we essentially are. So we are essentially, quintessentially creative, we are essentially, quintessentially loving, but we are not only that. And we are not completely that. The task of emancipation is to *shed*: to shed what we are not and to fully embody everything that we essentially are. That, I'm going to argue, is the central structure of emancipatory thought. From the point of view of the self, which is our topic here, what this means is: to *become* our true transcendentally real self, to actualise that human creativity, that source of energy and intelligence, capacity for love and right-action which sustains everything. To become that we have to shed our sense of a separate identity. We have to shed our sense of being separate egos. This doesn't mean that we lose our differences. But it does mean that we lose our sense, our illusion of separateness from everything else, from other human beings and the rest of nature.

In becoming that, what happens to our personality? Our personality actually grows, because we free ourselves from all the impediments. We free ourselves from all the blocks. If you imagine what we've got here, it's like a very pure infrastructure, the essential real inner being that we are. Then on top of that, we've got elements and levels which are consistent with it, which help it grow and flourish and actualise itself in our world of physical embodiment and agency; but also aspects and levels of heteronomy which block, constrain and are opposed to what we essentially are and its fulfilment

in the physical world. All these other aspects and levels of our being are, as well as that very pure infrastructure, constituents of our embodied personality. The moments of heteronomy, which outweigh and indeed often completely screen our inner being, block our essential impulses, our essential goodness, our essential loving and creative energies. We actually belittle ourselves, we make ourselves smaller than we essentially are and potentially could be. So when you shed all your illusions you become less limited; you expand yourself, your powers and your potentialities and your capacities for successful action in the world.

We have now consolidated our tripartite schema. We've got the ego, we've got the embodied personality, we've got the transcendentally real self. They are, if you like, some basic parameters, some fixed points for our argument here. Then we have the dialectic of the expansion of the embodied personality. How you can become less limited, less restricted. How you can become more successful, more creative—this is something we all want to do, want to be more successful in life. And the argument will be, and this is the emancipatory argument in general, the structure of emancipatory discourse as such, that if we want to become more successful, more loving and better human beings, then we do so by shedding everything that is illusory, and then we will expand. We will become more creative, more energised, more happy, more fulfilled. This is looking at the structure of the argument from the very first level of critical realism which is just ontology, thinking being.

Now what happens when we introduce the second level, which is thinking being negatively. The central concept here is of course the concept of negativity itself, i.e. absence. Now absence and absenting are central to process and change.

The positive bipolar of absence is emergence, creativity, novelty. I will go into this in some detail, in a moment. Let me go first into a very basic presupposition of western thought. This is that when we have change, change is always accidental. So change is always assigned to the predicate in the subject predicate form. You have a fixed subject and a changing predicate.

Change is never put into the subject: so you don't have change, the subject never changes. What is the ideological meaning of that? That means you can't change. If you're the subject, then you are fixed, that's it. You can't change yourself. You just accept it. But if you can change, if you put it in the subject, then you have the possibility of self-negation, subject negation, developmental negation; and self-development, self-transformation becomes crucial. This really is what we are talking about when we are talking about freeing ourselves, we are talking about transforming ourselves from a state of heteronomy and servitude into a state of freedom, a state of happiness or whatever objective we have. So self-transformation has to be crucial.

Now there is a second implication of great ideological significance in the assumption of the fixity of the subject in the subject–predicate form. This is that the appropriate categories in terms of which to make sense of the world are those of analytical thought, but in fact formal logic plays only a limiting role in the process of actual scientific discovery. Formal logic comes in when you are writing up a research report which you have to get refereed and you have to show that you have made some contribution to the discovery of scientific knowledge. You do this by showing how you can deduce your results from a nice set of axioms, showing that everything fits consistently. But that is just the end product, the icing on the cake, not the beginning or the main part of the process. It is the end, the Leibnitzian moment in a scientific discovery and when you get there, you don't stop there, you immediately go on, you immediately go on to a further round of scientific enquiry—you ask what is responsible for that which you have written up in your research report.

So what's happening in science? It's really something like a dialectic in which you have some sort of an incompleteness or absence which generates a contradiction or an anomaly or a problem, given the restricted nature in terms of which the subject matter is being thought. It remains a problem so long as you try and use the very thought which generated the problem; so long as you remain in the same problematic, the same

theoretical field. To escape you have to move out of that stuckness. Where does this move, announced by the emergence of a new concept, come from? It can't come from induction, it's not within the existing problem field and it can't come from deduction—it can't be deduced from the existing problem field. It comes out of the blue, from nowhere, the silence, the pause, the gap, the space between or beyond thought. It comes from a moment which can be characterised as a moment of transcendence. The concept of gravity strikes Newton when he goes for a walk, when he sees an apple falling to the ground. So creativity can be defined in general as an irruption or super-imposition of a transcendent cause on to an immanent ground. It is no accident that it happens specifically to Newton. He's done all the hard work. The real creativity, the moment of emergence, the transcendental moment in the process of scientific discovery occurs only to the very well prepared mind. So that's the general pattern of the spontaneity of creativity. The fact is that we can't really predict it; is if it's genuinely new, genuinely emergent, it will come from nowhere. We can't get it by a mechanical algorithm, it just happens, it just comes.

Now this epistemic transcendence doesn't mean that it is not ontologically immanent, so that when we fully understand (and perhaps go beyond) gravity, it takes its place as a natural structure like any other. But at the moment it irrupts into consciousness, it has come epistemically from nowhere, out of the blue. So when you are trying to make sense of the existing, already described theoretical domain with a new idea, then you are going to have to tease all your pre-existing concepts, you are going to have to stretch them, you are never going to be able to observe formal logic in your day-to-day practice. We don't do this. It's just not true. Meanings and truth values don't remain stable in scientific discourse. Your only goal is to resolve the problem. You will always strive at seeing what there is in a new light. You will always mess around, like a scientific *bricoleur*, using the junk in the builder's yard to construct something to grasp the level which no-one has ever adequately conceptualised before. You will always tinker around using the Heideggerian

ready-to-hand. In any event, scientists never allow themselves to be bamboozled by an ideology of an admittedly very nice set of formal logical techniques.

We can further radicalise this insight in two ways. First of all the intuitive as well as the discursive plays an important role in science and in everyday life. The right brain, the imagination, is part of science, not only the left brain. But the left brain, the masculine side, if you like, the instrumental side, the discursive side, it is this that is always fetishised in philosophy. In restricting ourselves to discursive thought and the discursive intellect, we are putting aside not just the faculty of intuition which has to be rescued out of the limbo that philosophers have assigned to it, but something else. Beyond intuition and discourse we have something like supra-mental consciousness and in the moment of transcendence we become, we lose our sense of separate identity, we just are one with something, which, looked at in a dualistic way, is other than ourselves.

Let me give you some examples. Transcendence is not something mystical. When you listen closely to a certain piece of music then your sense of separate identity from that music breaks down. You become one with that piece of music. When you fall in love you become one with the person you love. Your sense of duality, your sense of separateness, your sense of distinctiveness breaks down. This is very, very common. The capacity for transcendental identification is a vital feature of human existence. I can't fully understand someone else unless I can see myself in them. This is co-presence. I have to see myself in the other and the other in myself. We actually identify transcendentally with other beings the whole time. Now this suggests, if we carry this a bit further, that this inner essential self that we are, this transcendentally real self, this essentially real self is in fact continuous with and indeed a part of an essential ultimate ingredient, intrinsic to the universe, which essentially constitutes us.

This essential ultimate ingredient which defines my inner-self, what I will call my *ground state*, is connected to the essential ultimate ingredients which define the innermost levels of all

other beings too, and so we move on to the idea of something like a *cosmic envelope* which bounds and binds the whole of creation. If we are like a bead on this cosmic thread then we can see how obviously wrong it is to think of ourselves as atomistic, punctual, solid things. We should rather look at ourselves as akin to magnetic fields with fuzzy edges, loose, shifting, intersecting boundaries. Don't try and think of the self as if it were a supposedly solid thing like this table (which is of course actually empty). If you think of a magnetic field, it provides a much better paradigm for understanding ourselves. For, our ground-states are intrinsically fields of possibilities, some of which must be actualised; but which, and in what form, depends upon what other forces and bodies, charges and constraints there are in the field of their actualisation, which field is our embodied personality and its context. In this way, thinking of our inner-self, our transcendentally real self as a field, underpinning another field which is the totality described by our embodied personality in its context, we can get a much better grip on the problem of who we are. So thinking of our embodied personalities as a magnetic field also makes it easier for us to see how its precise definition will vary from time to time, and context to context. Thus, sometimes we would include our partner, or our parents or our children. And sometimes we would include our dearest possessions. Sometimes we would include our job. At other times they would be totally accidental, they wouldn't be part of ourselves. Thus, if someone tried to steal something from you, you might say, 'no that's mine' and act instinctively as if this were part of your identity. If someone tries to snatch Rs. 2 from me, I'd prevent it. You could say this was a basic instinct.

Our transcendentally real selves then, are fields, differentiated fields, of the cosmic envelope. It is in virtue of our unity with other beings on the cosmic envelope, a unity which can be sharpened into the idea of our co-presence within them and them within us, that we can transcendentally identify with other things on that envelope. So if it is the case that we can identify with other human beings, and indeed other forms of

existence, we must therefore impute to them some sort of implicate, involved, enfolded, implicit or potential consciousness. Because of the ubiquity of transcendental identification, we can say there may be something in the Vedic view that perhaps everything is in some way enfolded or implicit consciousness. This would in some way make everything a synchronic, emergent power of consciousness. On the other hand, we know that it is true, according to western science, that everything including consciousness is a diachronic and synchronic emergent power of matter. Everything is a historically evolved power of matter; and consciousness we know only emerged in the world, at least at the human level, at a specific point in cosmological, geo-historical time. So we have to break down the dichotomy between consciousness and matter, we have to re-think this dualism too. Matter is a synchronic implicit, implicate or enfolded power of consciousness and consciousness is a diachronically and synchronically emergent power of matter; and these two positions are not really inconsistent at all—although to say this offends materialistic preconceptions. Actually materialism is not a very well understood concept, as I would like to go into on another occasion.

This cosmic envelope may be characterised by qualities that our minds tend to think are opposed but actually are not. Spontaneously we think we are separate from everyone else, but this isn't actually true. We're all part of a much bigger quantum field, a much bigger field. We know that it's not even true at the level of our material transactions, because now we know we are globally interconnected with everything else, and if our planet is to survive, if the human species is to survive, very radical changes in our material transactions with nature and with each other are essential. This is, if you like, the political cutting edge of the argument: that unless we realise our own sense of interconnectedness and unless we can move in some way to that alethic level of being then we are on the road not only to destroying ourselves as individuals wherever we live, but also our eco-niche and hence our species, and indeed our host planet and its global ecosystem. Suppose we continue to burn fossil fuels at the present

rate. It may appear to be in my interest, or the interest of my ego, but it is certainly not in the interests of my neighbours; even more to the point, it is not in my real interest, for such an act is deleterious to the eco-system in which I live; so I am undermining by this act the very material conditions of my being. This is madness, we are all beginning to appreciate how globally interconnected we are. At every level of our being we are individually, collectively, socially, globally as one, we live or die together in mutual dependence upon the eco-system that we have been violating.

It is important to note that I'm not saying that this cosmic envelope is God. Sure if you wanted to think of it in this way, that is fine, as is a purely secular interpretation. For us, the cosmic envelope is a sort of absolute, whether it is constant or changing and developing; and if you wanted to think in religious terms then you might suppose that the cosmic envelope would be a property of God, caused by or dependent on God. But that is not essential to the argument. What I am arguing for here is a spirituality within the bounds of secularism, consistent with all faiths and no faith. We do not know what the beginning was, I do not know what it is outside the cosmic envelope. I do not know what the end will be. That is the honest truth, I do not think anyone does.

However, there is no reason to suppose that the cosmic envelope is not itself unbounded, that the absolute is not itself infinite. For we know from transfinite mathematics that we can have gradeable hierarchies and relations within infinities: there can be degrees of absoluteness. So if you reach the point of your alethic being or true self that doesn't mean that your own personal development stops. You know you can become richer and deeper, closer and more interconnected, more capable of sensing and feeling and being one with everything. You're going to be an expanding individual. It is self-expansion that I'm talking about here. That is the expansion of your limited embodied personality into an unlimited unbounded one. This involves the shedding of those heteronomous determinations which are woven into your separate sense of identity, cut off or opposed to other beings. This shedding

of our own sense of our separate identity, this expansion to a fuller, more unlimited self is in principle endless, because once we've got rid of all the heteronomous orders of determination there's no limit to what we could do or be. So the feeling that once we become enlightened or, in more secular terms, once you have a good society, a society in which, to use Marx's formula, the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all, the feeling that that's only the beginning, not the end, of real history, that's when real human being, when our real development starts, is, I believe, true.

This is what we've got out of the second edge of negativity. A very, very valuable thing. The idea of self, as a subject in process of transformation, the idea of subjects as necessarily transcendentally identifying with other beings, the idea of transcendence as not something mystical but something we all do in practice in everyday life, the idea of science as a creative process which can't be bound by a set of algorithms, which is not adequately represented by formal logic, and the idea of intuition and beyond intuition, deep levels of consciousness in which subject–object duality breaks down. Now the interesting thing is that everyone would agree that we are living in an alienated world and that our selves, whatever they are, the selves that post-modernity split and sundered, inhabit a deeply dualistically dichotomised world. Actually realism about transcendence, about non-duality, leads to the self-transcendence of realism, conceived as presupposing or involving subject–object duality. Indeed as we begin to see how transcendence, non-duality and transcendental identification underpin all aspects of our being, we at the same time begin to roll back the zone of duality generating dualism, contradiction and split within our lives. But in the world in which we live, as we live and perceive it now, and indeed in any world which is constrained (as ours is by physical parameters and laws), there will always be elements of duality, and the necessity to think and act in dualistic as well as non-dualistic modes. The idea would be that one lived one's life, as a non-dual being, in, but not of, the duality which constrained and operated in the world about one.

Of course if we could live our life fully in a non-dual mode, then there wouldn't be any duality, there wouldn't be any split. But we would still have to live it in the world as embodied personalities, facing limitations and constraints. So our transcendentally real self is manifest, it may be absolute, it may be something which is so valuable and precious that that's where all the creative genius comes from, that's where love ultimately comes from. But it has to manifest itself, in a relative world, a world which is constrained by physical laws. So we will always be slightly limited, there will always be physical constraints on us, there will always be a sense in which it seems as if we are constrained. Our ordinary concepts are too crude really to adequately capture this. What we have to do is distinguish the absolute in the relative, that is the infinite or unbounded in the finite or bounded. To see our way clearly here we have to understand that it will always appear to us that this is a table and this is hard. What we have to do is try not to act as if that is the case. Because we as physically embodied beings are spatially separated from each other, it will always seem as if we are not causally and cosmically interconnected. This is the illusion of physical being. I have to try and act as if that weren't the case and I can, you can, she can. But then that naive, intuitive feeling, that sense of separation, will always be there because it is spontaneously generated by the constraints of our own physical being—such facts as that Nirmalya is ten feet away from me, that I have to reach out to pick up this glass of water, and so on.

This is what we've got out of thinking being negatively. On now to thinking being as a totality. Let us look at the key categories here. There would be the category of totality itself, holistic causality, internal relationality. Why do we think that we aren't relations, that our relations with other objects aren't part of ourselves? Why do we look at ourselves in this peculiar sort of atomistic way? The Buddhist world view is very helpful here. Classical Buddhism denies the ego, as I've been denying it. It says, you've got to account for the self, including the sense of the separate self, in relational terms, and in terms of intra-dependent categories like cause and effect.

And when you do so, you find you can't really separate (this is the theory of dependent origination) the cause and the effect. Similarly, you can't separate the part and the whole. We're all connected, we're all totalities within totalities. It doesn't make sense to say that I stop here, some other totality, you, begin there. So whether we think in terms of cause and effect, in terms of part and whole and/or in terms of definition or constitution, we can't separate our relations with other beings from that which we are. The Buddhist theory says that we're all relational, to be is to be related. Now critical realism would say a few other things as well—that we distinguish and connect the essence from the appearance, the deeper and the more superficial, the enduring and the transient, the autonomous and heteronomous and the absolute and the relative.

We distinguish and connect the absolute and the relative. And I will actually argue that it is in keeping with the thrust of Buddhism that once you go below the ego what you have is the transcendentally real self in which you don't lose your difference, your singularity, your uniqueness; all that is preserved. What you lose is your sense of separateness and you forget it because you're part of the whole scene of creation. You don't think of yourself, this is the '*prajna*', the transcendental wisdom that follows *satori*; you don't think of yourself, you just are and act through yourself as part of the whole scene of creation. You are not more important than any other part of creation—you are just that point at which and in virtue of which you can affect, and the only point from which you can affect, the rest of being. You don't have a specific sense of yourself as such. You are just spontaneously, actively engaged. You're like a bundle of love and energy and creativity, so you don't have a separate sense of identity. In fact you don't think about yourself that much: you are actually a very concrete thinker. The Buddha was a concrete thinker, all the Buddha's, each of whom was different. Their Buddha-hood, their expressing transcendental wisdom actually depended on their uniqueness and appropriateness for their time, place and context, but they did not fetishise or dwell on this, they did not become attached to their uniqueness, or they could

never have expressed their Buddha-nature, their lack of a sense of separateness from the rest of being, which it was their task and joy to see in the process of self-realisation. Similarly, for those who believe there are different avatars, every avatar has his or her unique characteristics. Yet they all must be manifestations of the same divinity. We have to think, if you want to go into these realms of theology, the transcendentally real self as at once unique and universal, the spiritual self as itself dialectical. Now this itself is going to be mediated and differentiated too, and going to have its own geo-history. Everything then is brought within the categories of concrete singularity and dialectical universality.

Let me just come to what I think is the main totalising force within the social world. In terms of the third level of critical realism the main totalising force is love. It is love that is binding, love that's healing, love that's uniting. Opposed to love is fear, a very dominant force in our society, together with desire, a positive force of attraction or attachment, whereas fear is the negative force of aversion. Desire is not the same as love. Desire is a regressive attraction, an oppressive unification; something is desired in order to be consumed, used, manipulated, not unconditionally, for its own sake. All negative emotions are based on the absence or incompleteness, e.g. unconditionality of love.

We can begin to understand the post-modernist reaction, stressing identity and difference, to abstract universality. Post-modernism reacts against this abstract universality, saying we're all different and there is no right or wrong. There is also a regressive reassertion of difference manifest in fundamentalism or communalism, which is a fear-based reaction to the same abstract logic of abstract universality which says we're all different but I'm right and you're wrong.

Both post-modernism and this kind of fundamentalism or communalism sacrifice the moment of unity, the moment of universality. It is actually this which is given its most graphic sense when you are at, or close to, the level of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope. For there you immediately see that you are bound up with everything else.

We now briefly address the fourth dimension or domain of transformative praxis and reflexivity. I begin with four theorems about human action. First we have the irreducibility of intentionality. There is no action which isn't intentional. If it's not intentional, that is, if it's not informed by consciousness in some way, then it's not an action but a mere piece of behaviour. Second, we have the irreducibility of agency itself. There's no way that we can't not act. We can't be 'beautiful souls' separate from the rest of humanity. 'Beautiful soul' is a Hegelian figure, someone who would isolate himself from the rest of society. So even if you are a monk you will have to go with your begging bowl to the rest of society. You are bound up with the rest of society.

It is an illusion to think that you cannot act and it is an illusion to think that you can act in any other way than intentionally. It's also an illusion to think that you can act any other way than ultimately spontaneously because everything you do always has to be mediated by a moment of spontaneous, basic action, i.e. a moment of action that is not mediated by prior thought. If I think, 'How do I pick up this watch?' you know I can think well, should I pick it up this way, this way or that way. At some point, I'll just have to pick it up, otherwise I'll never do anything. Now this moment of spontaneity is very, very interesting from the point of view of our discussion here because the more well-versed you are in a form of behaviour, in the practice, the more capable you are of acting spontaneously. Someone who doesn't know French has to think very hard before they can recall the right words for the right occasion. You don't have to think very hard if you know how to drive. You know how to turn the wheel once you are thoroughly familiar with driving, you just do it spontaneously. Just as we speak spontaneously. Only rarely while we're speaking do we think about what we're saying. We just speak. Only very rarely when we're driving do we think about driving, we just drive. When we're eating our food we just do it. When we care for our child, we just care. We don't think about caring. Spontaneously, unconditionally, effortlessly, without trying, we just care. As the sun doesn't try to shine, it just shines,

or the acorn doesn't try to grow into an oak tree, it just (*ceteris paribus*) grows into one.

Actually, when you think about whether you should do something, that's when you don't do the right thing, or the best thing. If a baby is crawling around on the floor you would spontaneously go and pick it up. If you were to think, is that a good thing to do (particularly when 'how will I look?', 'what will they think?', 'this is supposed to be a seminar' type thoughts enter your head), then you probably won't. So the reason why Newton had the conception of gravity is because he was so thoroughly immersed in the field in question, so close to the ground-state of what he was immersed in (the alethic truth of the laws of what he was trying to understand) that, in a moment of rest, relaxation, 'off duty'/'off guard', on a walk, that alethic truth could slip into the space between his deliberations, from a space beyond his deliberations, into his conscious mind. 'Eureka!' Things don't fall, they are pulled; and the heavier the body, the more it attracts. Wow! This is the ineffable moment, that blissful, unforced moment when the light dawns on a problem or situation—the moment of discovery (or of rediscovery), of what could be called spontaneous right cognition; and we all experience it to some extent in every aspect of our lives. The more well-versed we are in an activity, the easier it is for us to perform spontaneously, unconditionally.

Let us think of the agency of caring in our gendered division of labour. The man typically operates instrumentally in a commodified, reified role. The woman typically performing her role has to think intuitively, tacitly, holistically. She doesn't sign a contract with her children. Unconditionally and spontaneously, often so it will seem infallibly (coming as it does from the ground-state) she just knows what to do. Moreover, just as she immediately decodes and identifies the meaning of the situation, she spontaneously evaluates it, in this way re-enchanting reality from the ground-state, endowing it with meaning and value, the meaning and value that disenchantment had drained away. And, she does this holistically, and will holistically sense exactly what they need. She will holistically be aware of the relative needs of her husband and children,

her household. So if we actually focus on what women do then we get a different conception of being and behaving which is a very interesting contrast with the dominant male one. But that's a subject for another occasion.' This, then, is where spontaneity has to come in. It has to come into action or we can't act at all.

Then there is the fourth theorem to the effect that all social action, everything we do, has to be captured in terms of all four planes of social being. It has to be captured in its material aspect in terms of our transactions with nature; it has to be captured in its relational aspect, that is in terms of our transactions with other human beings; it has to be captured in terms of it's systemic social structural aspect; and finally it has to be captured in its subjective aspect in terms of the stratification of our own personalities. In the case of action oriented to all these dimensions of social being, change always depends on some change at the level of the stratification of personalities, that is, upon an action by the agent, depending on a change in the agent, that is, upon his intentional manifestation or doing in the world. We can change nothing in the world without his action, and all action is or depends upon a change in himself, that is, something that he does; and nothing can occur without that. So all change depends ultimately on self-change; and all action depends ultimately on self-action; we can't do anything without our doing it, moreover, our doing it right at some level of description or order of determinacy. So that means that your action on yourself, basic action or spontaneous action, is a logical precondition for any other form of action. Hence any change in social being that you can affect depends upon your action, specifically in, on and by yourself, and any change in your action depends upon a change in your being; that is a process which, in its course and culmination, will always be oriented to the self-realisation of all other beings in the universe.

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[1] See my talk on 'Left versus Right Brain: Creativity and Emancipation' published in my collection of talks, *From Science to Emancipation*, Sage, New Delhi, London and Thousand Oaks, California 2002.

This is the theme of transformed transformative praxis, which dialectical critical realism always stressed. This means it is absolutely vital to change yourself, because if you don't, then you will tend to project your own problems on to the society you are trying to change; and that has been the failure of so many projects of social emancipation. Marx put it very well when he asked, 'who will educate the educators?' The educators must educate themselves: if you want to transform society you must transform yourself. Unfortunately most Marxists in practice haven't done that. They have merely transposed one form of master-slave relationship for another, substituting, merely displacing, the master–slave form from the capitalist/worker relationship to the party manager/populace one. We can't say nothing changed, that would be untrue. But the immediate producers under 'actually existing socialism' were no more in control of the labour process than they had been under capitalism. They may have had more social and economic rights but the deepest structure of relations remained the same: a relationship based on conditionality, attachment, exploitation and negative emotions such as fear and greed, a structure manifest at all four planes of social life.

So we have to get ourselves straight. 'I', the transcendentally real one, have to parent my materially embodied personality, like a loving, caring parent would a child, until that 'I', which is where I am at and who I am in the consciously lived flow of my daily life, am my own sole soul possessor. This means that we have to practice what I've called in my book, *From East to West*, dialectics of inaction. But I think now inaction is the wrong word. We have to think of inner action and outer action. That means we can't immediately identify the self and agency. The dialectics of inner action are work on the self. This is inner-work, or 'working in'—we all know about the benefits of working out for our physical being; working in just generalises this to take account of our mental and emotional as well as physical constitution. Agency or dialectics of outer action is when you do things in the world. Now obviously this is a relative distinction. But unless you theorise it, you won't understand the sort of deep wisdom in

Krishna's discourse in the *Bhaghavad Gita* when he re-articulated the problem of agency in terms of a novel conception of the self. He said that in order to answer the question of what is to be done, which we're all so obsessed about, we first have to know ourselves. You first have to know yourself. If you don't know yourself, who you are, what you are, where you are at, where you are coming from, where you are going, how can you possibly be at one with yourself—non-dual in your being, or one, whole. If you aren't at one with yourself then how can you know what to do? So this centrality of self-change—and of self-knowledge in self-change, and in turn of self-observation in self-knowledge (that is just observing, looking, listening without judging)—is very important for this global project that I mentioned. The fact that we have to change everything to survive. We have to change all social structures and forms, including the way we instrumentally use nature. That has to be changed. We know this. We know we're incurring eco-crisis. To change that there is only one place we can start, and that is here. But of course that doesn't mean that we don't act socially. Of course we act socially, but we act from the only place we can act, actually ever act, that is here, right here and now, the time you are in—now. Because as soon as you begin to act from your ground-state, as soon as you change yourself for the better, spontaneously and automatically, you will be acting better in society, because you must act in society. You will be practically engaged in the world.

Let's just focus on the dialectics of inner action. What does this mean? You first have to access your true self, your inner-self, you have to be in touch with it. And then you have to shed everything that is incompatible with it, everything that prevents you from being essentially you. This is the second moment—shedding. And then you have to realise it, that is embody it, realise it in all aspects of your being. So it's not just being perfect in your thoughts, you have to be perfect in your emotions, you have to be perfect in your physical nature as well. That's a huge project, the project of becoming who you really are, of becoming you, realising yourself and in that project you will be spontaneously acting in the best possible

way for the self-realisation of all. In this state you will be increasingly aware, self-aware: this is the moment of witnessing. When this transcendentally real self is effectively stabilised in your embodied personality, so that your embodied personality becomes an expression of that transcendentally real self, then you are enlightened, free.

And this really is something equivalent to the old eastern goal of enlightenment. The Chinese thought of this in terms of the Taoist ideal of inner-emptiness. This is lovely, because in this state there is nothing really there. There's no specific sense of self. It's just you—and when you are just you, you are at home wherever you are, for you actually carry your home with you. In becoming only and fully yourself you come home, whole, a non-dual being in a dual world. Then, in being just you, you manifest all the properties of your ground-state. All that endless creativity, that love, from the cosmic envelope. You can freely manifest this only if you're in a way empty: i.e. empty of everything else that will block, constrain, defuse it. Of course everyone is in their innermost being just this, just this inner-emptiness (an emptiness which will bubble forth in endless creativity and so on); but the problem is that everyone is not only this, or is not only what is consistent with this. To become only (or only consistent with) this, empty of the not this, to shed what is not that, this is when we are truly free; not only free but one with ourselves (in peace, not at war; inner-peace, not being at war),[3] when 'me' becomes 'I' and 'I' becomes 'me' we are free.

So everyone is their ground-state, their transcendentally real self. The problem is that everyone is not only not just

[3] It is significant that the story of the *Bhaghavad Gita* of the warring Pandavas and the Kauravas is really a metaphor for the internal war we fight within our own being, that is the being of our embodied personality. Similarly, the original Islamic concept of the *jihad*, the holy war, is about the struggle within our embodied personalities between autonomy and heteronomy, all those elements which check, block and constrain what we essentially are and potentially could be. If there is no inner-peace, if we are not in one piece, at one with ourselves, then is it really surprising that there is outer war?

this, everyone is not only just consistent with this; that is at one (in peace—inner-peace—not at war) with their ground-state, the possibilities of unconstrained enjoyment and development in life.

Let me just summarise by saying what I think of as the properties of the action of a being who is truly a manifestation of (and in this sense at one with) their real selves. That we all already essentially are. The first thing, the action flowing from such a being who is one with her transcendentally real self will be maximally coherent because it is spontaneously flowing from their ground-state. Why? Because such actions from someone who is situated in the ground-state of their being are actions from the junction of their innermost being and the rest of the universe. The corollary of this jettisoning of the ego, and all other elements of heteronomy and blocks on being what we essentially are, is that we will be essentially in tune or attuned to how everything else is. Our actions will be maximally coherent. This inner submissiveness to your essential self will be reflected in the outer responsiveness of everything else to that dharmic you.

The second quality of such action is that it would always be in the present, we would always be in the now. Most of us are in the past, most of us really are yesterday, or we're tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. How few of us are actually here, in the present. What a present to be in, in present moment awareness. We would live in the present, not necessarily for the present (alone) but in the present, in the 'wisdom of uncertainty'. We don't dwell on, which is to dwell in, the past; we don't dwell on the future, which is to be split (in your consciousness) between present and future; to split your time is to waste your time or your energy. We should just be in the now. And then we would be here, we wouldn't be somewhere else. Most of us are really somewhere else. There may be very good reasons for this. Our partner may be ill, we may be with him or her in hospital, but really the best way of being with them is to be for them, in being closely focused here. Thus, being here, being now and being in your ground-state, these are the most fundamental qualities of this kind of action, spontaneous, right-action.

The fourth property is that such action would be integrated, holistic, totalising, it would see everything as a whole. It would be spontaneous, it wouldn't be conditional, it wouldn't be trying to get tit-for-tat, it wouldn't be manipulative, calculative, draining. It would just be action, it would just flow. It wouldn't be looking for a reward. This ties in with the eastern theme of non-attachment. You wouldn't be attached, you wouldn't be placing conditions, you wouldn't be instrumental, you wouldn't be means–ends thinking.

The fifth aspect of this kind of activity is that, coming from a standpoint of non-split, non-dual being, it would be action beyond duality, oriented to the elimination of all duality inconsistent with the non-dual, non-split being of whole selves; and that means it would be activity oriented to the abolition of all social ills and indeed to universal self-realisation. Here it is important to say that if, or rather when, you lose your sense of separate self-identity, you love yourself just as much as anyone else. But you would also love everyone else and everything else just as much as yourself. (Of course this does not mean you would love them in the same way.) The first point is very important to realise because there are a lot of very lovely people who make the mistake of not loving or esteeming themselves. I'll go into this for a moment. In this dialectic of expansion that I'm talking about, from a limited attached self, to an unlimited, free, boundless self, there's a moment of what has been called 'translative' as well as 'transformative' spirituality. Translative self-change occurs when you build your sense of self-esteem. Many people have deficient self-esteem. So working on yourself is very important in building your own self-worth. Some of us have very weak egos. If we are not in our ground-state the ego can just as easily be too weak, as too strong; only when we are close to our ground-state can we safely let the ego go. Some of us have too little sense of our own self-worth. It's very important to bear that in mind. Spontaneously, however, in loving yourself you would also be acting for the benefit of all. So there's no opposition really between individual self-realisation and universal self-realisation or between individual and social change

The next feature of such action is that you don't blame or judge others; you just accept responsibility for everything in your field. This is a corollary of being in the here and now. For if something happens to you then you take responsibility for it. Don't blame someone else, don't shift responsibility. By blaming someone else you disempower yourself. If you made a mistake then you should take responsibility for it. If a mistake happens in your field and the cause or responsibility is mixed then still assume full responsibility. In that way you empower yourself. And you will then be able to more fully act in a socially engaged way to root out the causes of mistakes which may become calamities in the future. Assume responsibility for everything.

This action, this kind of action, has one more characteristic which I want to discuss. And this is that though in a certain sense it would not be un-complex; it would be simple and rich. Now 'simple' in an important sense, a sense that the western mystic, Eckhart, invoked when he said that the ideal is to want nothing, to have nothing and to know nothing. This is a very shocking thing to say. You want nothing, have nothing and know nothing. What is this 'know nothing'? Really! Most of us are teachers or students!

'Want nothing' is because you have no desires. By the same token all your needs are satisfied. You are in your ground-state, you're on the cusp of the cosmic envelope. So you are living a life of abundant self-sufficiency, if you want nothing and have nothing because you have surrendered or given everything to nature, the universe, creation. You don't claim anything for yourself, nothing is attached to you, you can't be bound by anything. You're completely free. So you have nothing, you have no possessions.

And you know nothing. What does this mean? First, just think. If your mind is very cluttered how can you ever learn anything? How can you really learn anything? 'Know nothing' means that there would be no preconceptions, nothing getting in the way, no barriers or obstacles to learning something new. And what you have already learned would not be rattling around in your mind, impeding your capacity to act,

it would be in your very being. It is there but it's tucked away as a power waiting to be exercised only if and when it's needed. If your mind is full you can't learn anything. Only in a certain sense if your mind is empty can you learn anything.

You have made what you have learned part of your being. You'd be free in a deep way, you don't need to know, in the sense of consciously cognise, hold in your mind or think about anything because you would already have built in that knowledge into your innermost being. And this is very important because, when you are learning something, as long as you have to memorise it you don't really know it. It's only when it is completely spontaneous, when it's part of your own being, that you truly know it. And then it doesn't have to be in your mind. Then there is nothing in your mind. Then you can, like the Taoist sage, roam free, empty through life. You are not bound by anything. You can act in the most virtuous and spontaneous way in any situation because you have no preconceptions, no fixations, you are not stuck. So this life of simplicity, having, wanting, knowing nothing is actually really a very beautiful life and you can see that I'm not exemplifying it now because the final remark is not spontaneously coming to me. But really I think there is no final remark. How could there be a final remark now that we just are part of the seamless web of creativity. Let's think about this. Instead I will remark a tribute to the magazine that's hosting this event, *Ekhon Sarjan*, which means: Now Creation.

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We have been treated to a sublime discourse, so let me begin by making a few observations about some salient points which Professor Bhaskar has made. It seems to me that he has taken us all on a kind of intellectual journey which begins with the 'I' and ends with 'me'. He begins by rejecting the rejection of the structuring ego which was typical of the Humean approach, the ego is there, the 'I' is there. It is real, very much real but what is the stable reference of this 'I'? – because it has a kind of universality, as he has very nicely put

it: it applies to anyone who utters it. But even then what is it that is individuated—I should say what is it to which the word 'I' would refer and capture individuality. But then Professor Bhaskar thinks that this 'I' or ego, which is cut off from all 'I's' and all non-'I's' is an illusion, very much so, and he begins his work of reconstructing or re-drawing the subject. He is totally doing away with the usual way of construing the self and other relationships and therefore he moves on from even embodied personalities which he does admit are real, though limited realities, and thence to what we all really and ultimately are, i.e. transcendentally real selves. Honestly, when I heard about this label transcendence, I was a bit troubled. I thought that he would mean something mystical but he has allayed that fear and he has himself said that the word 'transcendence' hasn't anything mystical about it and he has given us so many different senses and shades of transcendence, the most important of which he talked about with reference to man being placed with others, constantly enmeshed and in relationship with others which dissolves their separateness and makes possible, very concretely speaking, the transcendence of the separated ego. And once this separation goes, we have the image of the expansive self and that is where he would concentrate all his reflections on the self. And this is the end of the journey as I said, the notion of the real transcendent self as an expansive self but there's this complete merger between the I, the you and the we. In the course of answering questions which will now be raised, I am sure Professor Bhaskar will shed some light on the problem I started talking about—the problem of personal identity.

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You have used the term post-modern view in an overgeneralised way in that post-modernism does not say that the self does not exist. In fact it questions the self. It says that self is a construct

and you cannot equate this concept of the construction of the self with Buddhism and transcendence, going endlessly within. How does this relate to action especially?

First there are two ways to go: there is the intensive route and the extensive route. Now the deeper we go within, the wider we go in extent, so it may be easy for us to become one with another human being, in fact we must transcendentally identify with them for any communication to occur at all. It may be more difficult to identify with a caterpillar. And today there was in my bathroom a lizard. It was quite difficult to become one with it. I did feel a sense of separation.

Nevertheless, being one with our ground-states, because our ground-states are connected with the ground-states of all other beings, in virtue of our being beings in one universe, a uni-verse, we can, in principle, transcendentally identify with the whole of the rest of creation. As for social constructionism, the embodied personality is a construct, but who does the constructing? Society shapes you, but you always have to finish the shaping off, and you can finish the process off in an infinite number of ways consistent with that shaping; or you can reject and transform the shaping, and indeed all such shaping mechanisms themselves.

I want some clarification on the spontaneous element of spontaneous right-action – you gave the example of Eckhart who is relating to God.

Actually he is saying that if you have a concept of God in your head then you are split in your being from God. You have set up dualistic opposition between yourself and God. You are not one with God, so there is an element of heteronomy within your being.

How do you live in a non-dual state?

You cannot live in a non-dual state, but you can minimise the splits in your being and you can eliminate inconsistency with your ground-state so that you are effectively a whole autonomous being. There are really two questions, can you live the whole time in a non-dual state, and if so, how do you get there? There are two different things here. There is firstly the sense in which every action is or has in the last instance a non-dual component to it otherwise it could not be an action at all. Secondly, there is the sense in which before you have mastered a particular discipline, in-building it, making it one with your being, so that it can be effortless and easy, you must obviously practice it. Practice and mindfulness always precede spontaneity. However even practice, learning always presupposes a spontaneous component: non-duality is irreducible. So in the tensed world of linear time in which we live the acquisition of new skills is always going to be necessary. But there is of course an important question of what skills we choose to acquire. We have to be sensible about this. For instance, what does lying on a bed of nails prove? All it proves is that mind in a certain respect has conquered matter. But we conquer matter every time we perform an intentional action. I am conquering matter so simply—I am moving this. To prove that philosophical or spiritual point I do not have to lie on a bed of nails. I am not saying that such an activity never has a point. I would not say that about anything. But it is up to us what new skills and powers we wish to acquire. In any case what happens is that you have a well-known technique or discipline and you acquire excellence in it until you can spontaneously exercise your creativity in it. What we must appreciate is that we exercise that non-dual creativity at every point in the process.

The process of enlightenment is exactly continuous with the transcendence or non-duality that we experience in

everyday life and is itself an ongoing process. You yourself find that as you expand so you will also go deeper and that is why I do not think the cosmic envelope or the absolute, etc. is bounded. You will find ever greater heights of creativity. To work towards it you must work at it.

Can you say anything more about materialism?

I want to affirm synchronic consciousness, and also to see consciousness as implicitly enfolded in matter, a power or potentiality within it, synchronically awakened in acts of transcendental identification and diachronically emergent from it in the process of evolution. That is what I believe it is. I believe it is implicit in it in the sense that its own ground-state is constituted by the same essential ingredient as our ground-state. We do not know what flares in and out of existence in the sub-quantum field. I am not trying to do quantum physics, all I am saying is that the essential ingredient must be there in stones, in that sense rocks and stones must be divine, they must have their own divinity and we can achieve identity with them. One reason Darwin was a great biologist was because he loved animals. We can all achieve identity very easily with animals, and we can achieve identity with paintings, with other artefacts, we can achieve identity with our cars. So I am not rejecting materialism, but I am not accepting it either.

You are saying that ideas are not matter.

Ideas affect matter. There is obviously a distinction between the idea you have in your head now, let us say in your mind, and the way in which material sounds were produced so that I could hear it. The interesting thing is

what actually happens hermeneutically is that I immediately understand what you are saying without the mediation of matter but nevertheless the sounds are the vehicle which bring it to me. So of course there is a distinction, you can say, between levels of matter, that mind is a very emergent power of matter or that matter is very enfolded mind or consciousness.

What about collective transformation?

I think you have to go back to the conception of four-planar social being. Remember I argued that you have to understand any social event in terms of four dimensions. The dimensions of the stratification of the personality, our material transactions with nature, our social interactions and social structure. What I am saying is that in the stratification of our personality, we have an element within us which is a transcendentally real self which is also unique, which is what Marx presupposed as a condition of the possibility of, and which would be realised in a communist society. That is all. Everything else is transformation. And of course that itself (as I have already argued) is growing, we are in-building it, growing and developing it the whole time. So it is transformation all the way. We are shedding everything within ourselves, we are altering, radically transforming our social interactions and our transactions with nature and the whole exploitative social structure. So in no way am I belittling the project of collective transformation, but I would say, where does it start, where does this project start, how are you going to change the world? You will change it by acting. And you will change it, even when you are acting collectively, in and through your actions. That is the immediate point of reference, the immediate point of leverage. And when we think things through, the best and most efficient and ultimately tautologically the only way we

can in the end change the world is by acting, our acting ourselves. For in, and by your acting you are doing something yourself. Therefore prioritising self-change is an important step when considering transformation at all planes of social being, including the most deeply sedimented social structures.

It does not matter where you start, the practical questions will always concern your action. Of course, wherever you start you are going to be responding to something already there, but it is always going to be *you* who is responding or acting. When we are acting collectively we act in virtue of our capacity to be one with, actually become, the other. To do this is quite difficult, you really have to stretch yourself. You do not do it by stretching the other. We all think that the way we change society is by getting everyone else to agree with what we do. We have to understand how they are. And when we have complete unity with them we become them, not just metaphorically but also in a real sense. Then we will be acting maximally so as to change them and us. This is where the point of reference is: the self is the locus of change.

Is the ego an ontological trick?

If you go back to the tripartite model, though our embodied personalities do, the ego itself does not exist. The thing is it is a total illusion. No one is separate from other beings, to be is to be related, so to be is to be geo-historical. It is not that social structure is out there; that is right, it is out there but it is also *in here*. The social structure is *inherent* within us. We carry the social structure within us and so the embodied personality is totally relativised. I have even implied that the transcendentally real self is emerging and developing. The ego is nothing other than an illusion. You are not separate from other beings. It is an error, a category mistake. The thing

about critical realism is that illusions are also part of reality and they are causally efficacious parts of reality. So these three levels of the self that I have talked about, the ego, the embodied personality and a transcendentally real self are all part of ontology. The illusion, like a mirage or like a logical contradiction or an error, is false, in that it has no real object, but such things as mirages and logical contradictions and category mistakes are causally efficacious in reality. We know that falsity is causally efficacious. So what I am saying is that no-one has an ego here. No-one has an ego. We may have a sense of ego, we may have a feeling that we are separate from the rest of the world but we are actually not. We may have a feeling that we are a little homunculus determining our lives and we may act that way but we are not. We are really a victim of social forces and social structures, that is absolutely right. But how do we put that right? By recognising it, assuming responsibility for ourselves and trying to clear up the mess that we are in and that society is.

It is not an ontological trick. I am saying you are flesh and blood, you are not a trick, the state is not a trick. All I am saying is that if people have a sense of their own separate identity from social structures and other people then that is false. Society is an internally related totality. To think in abstract analytical terms about human beings and about society is false. That is the failure of the analytical discourse of modernity. That is the way we think. And the way we think is wrong. The way we think is also a geo-historical product and we can change it. I am not an expert on medieval times but certainly there was much more a sense of organic unity. And you can argue that it was not completely dialectical, in that it would not have satisfied all the criteria of dialectical critical realism. But it was more dialectical and more organic than contemporary life. At the beginning of the talk I assumed (this was the trickery if you like), that we all had egos but by that I meant that we all had a tendency

to feel that we are separate from every other person and the rest of the world because we are all subject to the category mistakes of the bourgeois, modern society in which we live. So we all feel we have an ego but in reality none of us do. We do have embodied personalities which are subject to the illusion that we are separate from the rest of the world. And until we realise we are not, we will not see how we are being used by systems of oppression. And these systems of oppression are also within us.

It is tremendously empowering when we realise that actually nothing could happen without our being in a non-dual state. The whole of society, all the systems of oppression cannot get by, cannot sustain themselves for a moment without our spontaneous, loving, creative activity. Without that they would collapse. Is that not an important point! This leads directly into the asymmetry of liberation. We are in a situation of chronic global crisis, at every level, however you look at it. To realise that though none of this could occur without our loving creativity, we could be loving and creative and flourishing without it, it is on that and that alone that the possibility of human emancipation depends. It is on that asymmetry.

The superstructure, all these systems of oppression actually dominate and occlude this hidden substratum on which they depend. That is a figure which should be very familiar to Marxism and all radical critiques. For those who believe in the project of emancipation have always recognised that what we want emancipation from dominates and occludes the reality on which it depends. If the working class realised that they were exploited and they realised it truly and deeply in their being, then capitalism would not exist. That was Marx's point. Rousseau's point was that we are all free, if we really realised it then social oppression would not exist. My point is that we act in, but not only in, the way social utopians have believed we could act. We already do so—to sustain the structures of oppression. When we realise

that, that is saying something new. That is saying something new because people who have talked about spirituality have always talked about it as if it were unusual, and in some way opposed to social emancipation. I could also put my argument in very dramatic terms by saying that what we have here on earth is hell, but it is hell reposing on a layer of heaven. What we have to do is get rid of the layers of hell and then we will find that heaven will expand. So long as anyone is unfree we are all going to suffer and so that is why only something like Marx's formula can actually capture the ideal of true spirituality. That the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all. As long as one person is in one respect unfree then we could not have a society which conformed to that criteria.

To sum up, it is transcendence, non-duality, the properties of the ground-state like creativity, love, spontaneous knowingness, this level which we can surely call spiritual, is not something removed from our daily experience, but underpins and informs it all the time. I am saying that such spirituality is something quotidian which supports the whole, the rest of the superstructure, and it is not something in the future, an ideal merely to be strived for. It is something, a concrete reality, here and now. All we have to do is release it and eliminate everything else. This is not to say that it is not a huge project, but it is just as well that we know the scale of our task.

Chapter Three

Social Science and Self-realisation: Non-duality and Co-presence*

The topic is social science and self-realisation. I would like this to be very participatory. However, because I think there are quite a few people who were not at my talks, or the sessions I had last year, I will first do a little bit of recapitulation on the history of critical realism and on the structure of its latest phase. But I do not want to lose sight of the two main terms, that is social science and self-realisation. Because I have written and even talked here in this forum quite a lot about social science I will do that quite briefly and I will spend more time on the implications of the generalised philosophy of self-realisation that I am in the process of developing.

This philosophy even transcends realism and in a way it transcends thought, but I don't want to shock you too much! We will reach that position gradually and slowly. First let us look at the diachronic development of critical realism and then the synchronic structure of its most developed phase. Probably the best way I can describe the trajectory of critical realism, which is an ongoing process in thought, a process of continuing,

* Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, December 2001.

transcendence and self-transcendence, is to put it in a slightly broader context, that is the context of the philosophical discourse of modernity. Most of you will probably be familiar with some periodisations of this theme, so this may be a new but helpful one.

I am going to break the philosophical discourse of modernity into five phases. Each phase I should say was accompanied by a revolution, a revolutionary outburst.

The first phase, the phase of the classical philosophical discourse of modernity, was associated with the great bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly of course the revolution of 1640 to 1660 in England and then in 1789 in France. This discourse was structured in an individualistic way around egocentricity and abstract universality. The pivotal contrast born here was always between the modern and the non-modern or pre-modern. The moderns, represented by philosophers like Hume, had great problems in accounting for or sustaining their abstractly universal account of the world in terms of the very contrast that they were trying to articulate. If there is a pre-modern or non-modern, how can you say that the principles you are enunciating are universal. If they are universal, then they cannot be empirical or actual, they have to be normative, but that is not the way that discourse actually went. They claimed that this was something inherent in the nature of human beings and that what they were doing for the first time was describing how the world was.

This led through in to **the second phase** of the philosophical discourse of modernity which is associated with the revolutions of 1848 through to 1917. This is what I call high-modernism, and what the high-modernist did was say, look you Hume, and Kant for that matter, you are just apologists for the bourgeoisie and you are speaking in terms of abstract universal interest but really you are only articulating the interest of one specific class, and a national bourgeoisie at that. High-modernism in this way attempted to expose the claims of the classical philosophical discourse of modernity, to show that it had been an ideological mask or cover for the expression of a particular sectarian interest. This high-modernist discourse included

the discourse of Marxism. In fact it reached a particularly confident and consistent form in it. The problem with this discourse is simply that there has always been a tendency within it for it to be elitist and substitutionist. You can ask whether you are talking about Joyce or whether you are talking about Marx or Adorno: do you really speak for those that you would seek to represent; are you merely speaking *for* (and possibly even against) them, perhaps substituting in this way for the lack or absence of (in Gramscian terms) organic intellectuals. This discourse was left there as if it were in a limbo. And it is significant that later Althusser, right at (and perhaps even after) the end of this phase, was to take both science and ideology out of the social totality. Even today the elitist, substitutionist practice of 'speaking for' is prevalent. The leader or media will speak for you, not even to you. What I am going to argue here is that no one can speak for anyone else. Only we as individuals can speak for ourselves. But we are bound in such a way that when we speak most authentically for ourselves we will be speaking from a position in which we have no ego, so we will be speaking for all, be speaking for the totality. And actually I very much agree with the thrust of many of the themes of high-modernism, but in a nutshell my critique of Marxism would be that it did not go far enough, and that Marxism actually presupposes certain spiritual presuppositions, spiritual presuppositions of the project of emancipation, namely that people are such that they can sustain a society in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all. That means that your development is of as much significance to me as my own development. This actually articulated a beautiful idea which I want to stay with. So when I am talking about the philosophical discourse of modernity, I do not want you to think that I am against everything it did or that I am regressive; it is really to see how we can fit critical realism into this whole trajectory.

The third phase in the discourse of modernity was associated with the theme of modernisation. The key dates here are 1945, the end of the second world war, and 1947, the independence, formal decolonisation and partitioning of India. This

was the phase of modernisation. What can you say? That behind this was really something which was coming from the west to the east, from the north to the south, namely the ideal of how a society should progress and so it was unilinear. For there were theorists like Rostow who mapped out a single chart or path in terms of which societies must modernise. And of course people within those societies themselves were part of this rhetoric or discourse of modernisation. So from a philosophical point of view, what we can say is that it shared many of the weaknesses of the classical philosophical discourse and also of the high-modernist discourse, but in addition it imposed a kind of uni-linear and judgementalist imprint or stamp on the world. Obviously the more modern or the closer to the modern ideal you were then the better you were. There was only one way that societies could and should grow.

Sooner or later there was bound to be a reaction to all these theories. Because what happened is that the later stage in the development of the discourse of modernity took up the themes of the earlier stages as well, so it was a kind of progressive fine-tuning of the original discourse. And the backlash came with **the fourth phase** of the discourse around 1968. This reaction is associated with the revolutionary upheavals of 1968 and the early 1970s in western Europe, but also in Vietnam where there was a great war going on, and even in America, where there were protests both against the war and in expression of excluded sectors of the population. And of course it was a cultural revolution as well as just a political transformation or rather possibilities of political transformations. For it is important to appreciate that when I talk about a revolutionary outburst then I am not necessarily saying that the revolution was successful; 1848 was not successful and you could argue that 1917 has only been partially successful, and even 1945 only partially successful. So it is just that these dates signified either the possibility or the actualisation of major changes.

What happened around 1968 and a little bit later was that we saw the rise of the discourse of post-modernism, post-modernity. So post-modernism and closely associated the rise of the so-called new social movements, particularly feminism

but also movements which were concerned to articulate the interests of all those who had been tacitly excluded from the classical philosophical discourses of modernity. Post-modernism most clearly reacted against the whole logic of abstract actualist universality. It said, what are we doing, we are saying that the world is structured so that in every particular instance, every particular human being can be subsumed under one abstract universal. So if you are a member of the working class it doesn't matter whether you are white, black or brown, it does not matter if you are male or female, it does not matter what occupation you are in, so the logic and the politics of post-modernity and post-modernism was very much a reaction against that abstract universality. It said, wait a minute, there is a different kind of reality that you are missing out, this is the reality of identity and difference: how we define ourselves as individuals in terms of our specificities and differences.

And this was a very important corrective. Because if you look at it, does anyone know a single abstract actual universal, something that covers all cases of a particular type? Is there any such truth? The law of gravity, for instance, is supposed to apply to all bodies. Certainly if you interpret it in a critical realist, transcendental realist way it does. However, construed as describing actuality, what is actually happening, it is not true that all heavy bodies fall to the ground. This table is not falling to the ground because it is counteracted by differential forces. Wherever you look in the world you will see a multiplicity of forces and you will never see an abstract universal which is not instantiated in some particular way, in virtue of mediations and in virtue of specific geo-historical trajectories. This phase in the discourse of modernity was an important corrective. We started to get an idea that reality expressed differential and partial interests and these had to be recognised. Unfortunately one of the things that this particular phase in the discourse did was to attempt to throw out the baby of unity, of universality, together with the bathwater of the abstract, actual character of universality. I argued earlier that universality had to be understood dialectically, that

what we were concerned about always was *dialectical universality*, that is universality together with differentiations and mediations, together with geo-historical trajectories, or what I called rhythmics, and together with irreducible uniqueness, all of which defines the *concrete singularity* of every instance, everything that ever occurs. This would mean in concrete terms that two members of the working class or two members of the human race would always have to be understood in terms of their mediations, that is whether they are women or men, what kind of work they do, and also in terms of their geo-historical trajectories, where they are coming from, their place and past, and where they are going, what their tendential future. And once you have done that and you have found two instances of a type or two people who corresponded exactly in their universal, specific and geo-historical characteristics, there would still always be something which uniquely differentiated them. So, you can never leave out the moment of irreducible uniqueness. That is the kind of universality and singularity that I argue for.

To bring us up to date, the philosophical discourse of modernity did not stop with the debate between modernism and post-modernism. Rather, what happened between 1989 and 1991 was a further dramatic trauma in world history and this was the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and what was called actually existing socialism. This gave rise to a new discourse, a discourse of triumphalism on the part of western capitalist bourgeoisie, particularly American triumphalism. This was expressed very pithily and straightforwardly in a book by Fukuyama which was called, *The End of History and the Last Man*. So history had come to a stop. This encapsulated a logic of thought which was already there in the initial philosophical discourse of modernity, because once you say we moderns, we have arrived, then you rule out the possibility of change. In fact once you describe the world in an abstract universal way as consisting in constant conjunctions of events or actualised empirical uniformities then you put a halt to history. This last phase of western, and more especially, American triumphalism which generated in its wake the fear-based and regressive

reactions of all kinds of chauvinism, including chauvinism within the west I have to say, but also taking the form of religious fundamentalism and communalism. And a heightening of the sectarian discourses of post-modernity.

So that is the world we have got today. That last phase encapsulated a tremendous error, which is really intrinsic to that whole discourse—and that is that we can somehow get to a point in our descriptions in the world, or get to a point in the world where we have arrived, and when we have arrived, we do not have to go anywhere else, so there is a closure put to history. This is the doctrine of what I called ontological monovalence, that is the doctrine that a purely positive account of being, a purely positive account of reality, is possible. Not only are there no absences, no incompletenesses, no lack, nothing missing, nothing wrong, no negativity, no contradictions, no dichotomies, no splits, it is a lovely world and it could not be any different if you tried to change it. For, how could you change it? Because if history had come to a stop then your attempt to change would just be like throwing yourself against the tide of the sea: you would inevitably be thrown back. This theme that history has come to a stop is one that is central to that whole discourse.

What happened was that critical realism actually began around 1968 and was initiated really with a concern with problems of modernisation and underdevelopment. Specifically I was concerned with the problem of what was the relevance of economic theory for underdeveloped countries and I quickly came to the conclusion that it was irrelevant. But when I looked at the philosophical tools which should have enabled me to point to its irrelevance, I discovered that actually there was no way that I could do that, because philosophy had actually pronounced a taboo on the world: it had said you cannot talk about the world in itself, you can only talk about our descriptions of the world. So this doctrine, which I called the epistemic fallacy which prohibited a discourse in philosophy about ontology, so that there could be no argument or discussion about the world, about how the world was in itself, was encapsulated by Hume and Kant and was actually the conclusion of

a whole long train in western philosophical thought which had started with Descartes' prioritisation of thought over being. From a position of that Descartes had said I think therefore I am, so immediately knowledge and thought (and 'I') was put as prior and being (and everything that was not 'I' or my knowledge, or my thought) was put as secondary. Within two centuries Hume and Kant had drawn the conclusion that there was nothing we could say about the world (and both equally came to the conclusion that there was not only nothing we could say about the world in itself, but nothing we could say even about ourselves). And that remains. It was explicitly reaffirmed by Wittgenstein in the 20th century when he declared that it was impossible to speak about what the network describes, that is the world; we can only talk about the network, that is our language or beliefs.

Of course if you look at any philosophical theory then you find that there are implicit assumptions about the nature of the world. If you look at the classical theories of explanation which were going around in the late 1960s and early 1970s—and they are still the textbook models—they all talk about deductive subsumption of a particular instance under a universal empirical regularity. We are all familiar with the deductive nomological model of explanation. But what does it presuppose? It presupposes that the world is actually constituted by constant conjunctions of events or empirical invariances. So the epistemological theory embodies an ontological presupposition and when you go into it the ontological presupposition is quite false. But how can you say that? It is very difficult to say <u>that</u> in a discourse unless you can set up the philosophical respectability of talking about the world in itself. So what I did was look at the activities which were most prized by empiricists, namely scientific experience and the technological application of science, and I asked the Kantian question—what must be the case for these activities to be possible?

And ultimately indeed I was just my thought or thinking, so now there was a sharp divide between mankind, characterised by thought, and the rest of nature.

What must be the case for scientists to engage in experimental activity? It must be the case that they cannot find constant conjunctions of events and empirical invariances outside the laboratory, that is the only reason. If they were there waiting on the surface of the world then you would not have to set up a laboratory closure at all. For the whole significance of experimental activity is that you artificially induce a closure at the level of actuality, at the level of the pattern of events precisely in order to identify free from the operation of extraneous influences a generative mechanism, a structure, a law, a field at work, free from interfering forces. So this suggested that reality was stratified, structured, and also that the surface of reality was differentiated and of course also made change possible. With one blow, then, this argument established the legitimacy of a discourse about ontology and at the same time established a new ontology, showing that and how the previously existing ontology was false. That was the pattern of argumentation that critical realism pursued. You go to a problem, you are in a subject, or problem area, and you find a glaring contradiction, and this contradiction—I am now isolating a general dialectic at work—must be because of some absence, some incompleteness in the existing problem field. So in this initial case the incompleteness in the existing problem field was the incompleteness marked by the absence of ontology and secondly the incompleteness marked by the absence of the idea of stratification and differentiation and change.

With this new ontology and this new philosophy of science, it was then possible to look at some of the problems in the philosophy of social science which were rife with dualism and dichotomy. I will come back to that in a moment. Of course once you have a new non-dichotomous philosophy of social science you can then go on from this to a further field, seeing what it helps you say about values or human freedom or world peace, for instance. I will come back to that later as well. Let me just talk briefly about the problem field of the philosophy of social sciences as it was constituted say in the 1970s and still largely is today. It was riven by dualism and dichotomy. You had the contrast between positivism and hermeneutics,

between naturalism and anti-naturalism, between structure and agency, between the individual and the collectivity, between reification and voluntarism. You had the contrast between mind and body, reason and cause, between fact and value, between theory and practice. Everywhere this problem field was rife with dualism. Now what did critical naturalism do? What did it look for? It didn't take sides in the existing dispute, it didn't take sides at all. What it tried to do was find the grounds of the dispute, the common mistake that united both antagonists.

Let us take the case of individualism versus collectivism or holism. The individualists said that society only consists of individuals. The holists said it was not true, there are also mass phenomena. This is what Popper said, although he was an individualist. This was the way the debate was structured. There was also mass behaviour, crowd behaviour, there were wars which are fought by armies, and these armies consist of bodies of armed men, all of whom are acting in a particular way. Or they might point to elections and say well, we can trace general patterns and trends. What was common to both these schools—of methodological individualism and collectivism—was the idea that individuation had to be either by an individual or by a block of individuals, a sort of giant or mass individual. How you get round this is to say: what is being anyway? How many individuals are there in this room? Naturally one will think of an individual human being, but if you try and count the number of individuals, including tables and chairs, you will see that the question is meaningless. And actually what defines you as a human being is nothing particularly clearly marked, it is rather the set of relations in which you exist. What I argued was that what defined the objects of social science, such as the family or the economy, had nothing to do with individuals or wholes, but rather to do with sets of relations. Thus economics explores the relationships between buyers and sellers, between capitalists and wage labour, the study of the family describes the relationship between parent and child, husband and wife. We are always concerned with a relational subject matter.

Similarly in the case of the mind-body dualism, closely related to the reason cause dualism, the common assumption there was that nothing intentional or ideational could put matter in motion. So you either had to be a materialist, that is reduce ideas and mind to physical matter, or you had to say that ideas and mind were autonomous from physical matter. But that is clearly not the case because if I ask someone to raise his hand, he will raise his hand and therefore my speech action has given him a reason for producing, initiating a particular change in the physical world. And obviously you are listening to me now and what is happening is that I am producing a sequence of sounds and they are having an effect on you, just as they had an effect on the person raising his hand. It is obvious that mind puts matter in motion. It is equally obvious, when you think about it, that mind is heavily affected by our bodily conditions so we get a view of causality which allows for emergence. So we build on to our notion of the stratification of reality the idea of emergent powers and then we can think of mind as an emergent power of matter which, like any emergent power of matter in the physical world, is capable of acting back on the matter out of which it was formed. Then we can make sense and start to give explanations in sociology and psychology of why it is that people come to have their reasons, causal explanations of why it is that people come to have the beliefs that they do. That position I called critical naturalism.

Let me just briefly tell you what happened after critical naturalism. What I argued for was that these dichotomies and dualisms in thought in the social sciences and the philosophy of social sciences actually reflected dichotomies and dualisms in social reality and in particular they reflected duality in practice. Duality in practice and non-duality in practice is going to be a major theme here. Once you have got over these dualisms in thought then it is natural to move on to the question of values, moving away from science and social science into their evaluative role, to ask questions about values. Here the dominant philosophy of the day was one characterised by Hume's Law, i.e. the idea that you could not in any way rationally

justify a position. So if you believe something is right and I believe something is wrong, then these are just two subjective interpretations. Two subjective ways of looking at the world. We cannot say that one is right and one is wrong. Now obviously that cuts the ground from under any ethical or political discourse, because everything you do in the world is motivated by values. It also cuts the ground from the possibility of rationally justifying any action. So again, let us see how the process of immanent critique, transcendental and dialectical argumentation allow us to see the fallacy in this view of things. What is the privileged position here? The privileged position here is facts. We are led to believe that we can argue about facts, that is fine. Suppose you say that something is true and something else is false. What are you doing when you say that something is true? If there is some behaviour or an action which is motivated by a belief which is false then how can you possibly condone that action? What action is there in the world which is not operated under some sort of belief? Once you allow that falsity and truth are themselves norms, how can you do something informed by a belief which is false? Of course you can do it, you can even give a reason for doing it, but you know there is a dissonance or a tension there. *Ceteris paribus*, you should always act under the truth, under a belief which is true, and if you have a belief which is false you should try not to act under it. Once you allow that then you allow—this is the thin edge of the wedge—the possibility of a rational discourse in ethics and politics.

Having argued that truth and falsity structure factual, purely positive or non-normative discourses, you have accepted that there are values in the social world. But of course truth and falsity are not the only values in it. You have accepted that there are values in the social world, but of course truth and falsity are not the only values in the social world—there are human needs, wants and aspirations; and *ceteris paribus*, we have to say human needs always ought to be fulfilled. Then you can have a rational discourse about homelessness and its causes, you can have a rational discourse about poverty, you can have a rational discourse about malnutrition. So we can

use science to illuminate our evaluative, that is our political and moral positions.

Once we have started looking at questions of freedom, of value, we move on naturally to the whole question of freedom and human emancipation. Here it was natural at the time to look at Marxism. Marxism is still a very powerful body of thought because it does attempt to isolate a fundamental feature of the contemporary world. Very few people could possibly deny that capitalism is a major fact about our existing society. At a methodological and philosophical level Marx had claimed that Hegel had actually isolated the rational kernel of the scientific method—and I agree with him, dialectic is the scientific method -but unfortunately he had shrouded it with what he called the mystical shell. In fact Marx wrote to Engels saying that, if only he had the time he would love to write two or three printers sheets explaining what the rational kernel in Hegelian dialectic was. But unfortunately that time never came. So as no-one seemed to know what dialectic was, or what its rational kernel was, this was the next step that critical realism took—in the form of dialectical critical realism. What I argued was that dialectic was a very rational process, characteristic of all learning and development. It is motivated and powered throughout by negativity, by absence. What sets the dialectic going is some absence, such as in the human world a lack. You are hungry so you are driven to look at the constraints on your satisfaction of your desire for food. Then you try and abolish or eliminate the constraints. In science you leave something out of your description of reality. Sooner or later that something you have left out will resurface in your description of reality and take the form of a contradiction. Okay, you are a male chauvinist discourse. You leave out women, sooner or later women are going to sneak back in, actually they were always in. All these discourses of exclusion tacitly presuppose the term which is excluded and at some time the term which is excluded is indulgent enough to tolerate its exclusion. But sooner or later in one form or another it will manifest its right to be included. I am using metaphorical terms, but we can stick to scientific dialectic or dialectic in

science. And what you would have here is an incompleteness generating a contradiction, a dualism, a split, generating further contradictions and splits until these contradictions proliferate to a point of crisis and then the crisis just has to be resolved. How could it be resolved? It could not be resolved by induction or deduction. Rather, it would have to be resolved by transcendence to a new, more totalising world view. For example, by Newton's discovery of gravity, or Einstein's theory of relativity. They brought something new, de novo, a new concept came in and revolutionised the existing world view and so we move on to a new round of scientific dialectic; perhaps we have discovered a new level of reality, and then the whole process starts again.

The whole process is really structured by absence: first in the form of incompleteness which initiates it; second it is negativity in the form of contradiction which stimulates the crisis which motivates you to transcend an existing problem field. And, what happens when you are transcending it is that you have a moment of creative discovery which actually cannot be induced or deduced from the existing subject matter; so it comes from the epistemically unknown, the absent. And then you start a new process. This suggested that absence was very important in social life, not just in dialectic and not just in developmental learning. And of course it is. We know that nothing positive could exist unless it was constituted in part by absence. Just think of handwriting. How could you make out handwriting except by looking at the spaces that separate the positive marks on the paper. We know that matter is largely constituted by empty space at whatever level we look. We know that this room, whatever way we look at it, is punctuated by absence. Actually, there is no way you could have purely positive being. There is no way in which positive being, unmarked by absence or space, could exist. But the contrary is not the case. You could have nothing, there is no logical impossibility in having no positive being, at all. So actually absence and negativity is in every way prior to presence and positivity. Absence is essential to change. What happens when anything changes is that there is an absenting of something

which was given, which was already there, and a presenting of something new. In human action what we are always doing is transforming what was there and presenting something new. So every human act is a transformative operation in the world and on the world. Obviously, then, absence is a critical category. And the mystical shell in Hegelian dialectic and indeed in western thought was just the absence of the concept of absence. Because, what Hegel had done in his Logic was to go from being to nothing to becoming. After nothing, which is indeterminate, no more negative concepts are treated by Hegel. Instead, arguing that negation always cancels itself in the process of becoming, he had removed the very concept which would enable him to reflexively situate his own scientific discovery. That really is the rational kernel and the mystical shell in Hegelian dialectic clearly accounted.

I argued that critical realism was initiated by considerations on problems of modernisation, of what, if you like, the west could do for the east, science could do for humankind. Having gone increasingly deeper into questions to do with emancipation and freedom, I now began the reverse movement, so to speak, considering what the modern and post-modern, the hyper-modern world of globalising commodification could learn from the non-modern and pre-modern, from the ways of life and discourses that it had displaced, what, if you like, the west could learn in turn (in return) from the east. By the early to mid-1990s there was a great demoralisation in the west on the part of socialists and the left generally. Actually that is still quite prevalent. So it was natural for me to ask what had gone wrong. What had gone wrong with the whole experiment? Of course that is a very complex question, but if you look at a specific body of thought then you can see that it actually presupposes something about human beings, namely, their capacity for identification with each other. This is the philosophy I am going to present here and, I am going to call it the philosophy of generalised co presence. In a nutshell what a secular ideal such as Marxism presupposes is that we can really act socially in such a way that each of our developments is equally important, that there is no kind of ego involved. Of

course I still remain as an individual, but really I am indifferent, it is equally important to me that you should develop. Now what this means is that we have a society in which there are no more oppressive hierarchical relations. A hierarchical relation is one in which someone's happiness or freedom or development matters more than someone else's. I have called these relationships master–slave relationships. So what Marx's ideal of a communist society actually presupposes is the possibility of a society without master–slave type relationships. And what actually happened in actually existing communism was that the immediate producers (this is my claim, my remark), the immediate producers were no more in control of their labour than they had been under the old regime. Rather, one set of master-slave relationships was replaced by another. Instead of capitalist masters you had party-manager masters. That is not the only reason why it collapsed; and that is not to say that there were not very important things that happened because of the existence of a Soviet bloc. For example a welfare state in the west, de-colonisation, the rise of feminism—these were major gains. Also, the very possibility of an alternative to capitalism was very important to creative thought, but as to changing the fundamental type of oppressive structure, as to beginning to actually introduce an emancipated society, there was no attempt made there. This led me into a concern with what you could call the spiritual presuppositions of emancipation, and then I went back to look at eastern thought. Since my last published book was *From East to West*, you can see how the trajectory of critical realism was reversed, so as to dig up spiritual resources from the east for emancipatory projects which had derived from the west. And the general position that I would argue for today is that emancipation depends upon our rethinking this very deep level. That is the developmental background.

Now I will talk about how all emancipatory projects are committed to certain very deep presuppositions about the nature of human beings, the social world and the natural world. This I want to articulate around a four dimensional structure for thinking being. The important thing about critical realism

is we begin to think being. And we have to think being as being, but then we have to think being processually, that is, as involving absence and change. We have to think being as a totality, that is, as a whole and as involving internal as well as external relationality, and we have to think being as involving transformative praxis and reflexivity. Reflexivity is just the capacity we all have to monitor what it is that we are doing, and the capacity that we all have to reflexively situate and explain our situation. This marked out four stadia or moments of critical realism in its most developed phase.

The first level I call the level of ontology, that is the level of being as such. The second I call the level of negativity, this is being, thought as also containing absence, as containing becoming, creativity, emergence and change. The third level is being as a totality, that is being bound together as a whole and in the social world. What is particularly striking here are phenomena such as solidarity and love which are binding forces. The fourth level is the level in which we understand being not just as in itself and as a structure and not just as a process but as a whole, and not just as a whole, but as a whole involving transformative human agency as an essential part of that whole, and involving the capacity of those transforming human agents to reflexively situate and understand and account for their own behaviour.

Now let us go into the first moment, that is the moment of ontology. What critical realism argues is that ontology, that is the study of being, is essential and inevitable; and if you do not explicitly think being then you are going to implicitly secrete or presuppose some pre-existing account of being. So if you have to do something, then it is better to be self-conscious about it. Now when you look at being, you find that it is structured, differentiated and changing. So you then have to ask what is it that happens when a scientist goes into the open world with an empiricist, false theory of being, a false consciousness. What is it that he does? He must tacitly presuppose the nature of the reality he denies, he has to tacitly presuppose in practice that the world is structured, that laws are causally efficacious outside the laboratory. So he is split,

he is split between his theoretical consciousness and his practical consciousness. This idea of false consciousness is essential to all attempts at demystification. They are really saying: look, there is something you have left out of reality, there is something that you have to tacitly presuppose in your reality which you are not aware of. So Marx in his analysis of the capitalist mode of production says, what you have left out is the secret of the capitalist mode of production, that is the extraction of surplus value from unpaid labour. So using two simple conceptual distinctions between labour and labour power, that is between the work you do and your capacity as a human being to do that work, and use value and exchange value, he is able to pinpoint the hidden secret of the capitalist mode of production, its extraction of surplus value from unpaid labour. The capitalist mode of production necessarily generates a screen, formed out of fabric woven from the world of exchange and distribution, around its foundational structure, the hidden processes of the mode of production.

So this is the paradigm for all demystifying projects. In a similar way you can say that—to take an example from the spiritual tradition within the east, the Vedic tradition—a lot of the world is just maya, it is just illusion. But actually why is it that? It is because agents in this world are in denial of the fundamental reality which is absolute Self or spirit. When Buddha tries to demystify, tries to enlighten the people who are listening to him, what does he say? He says you think you can find happiness, you think you can find salvation, you think you can find grace in the transitory, ephemeral pleasures of this world, but look, just test for yourself, does anything transient satisfy you? You are hungry, you have a good meal. Fine, it is a part of living, but does it give you the satisfaction you really want because sooner or later you will be hungry again. So let us go to a vantage point which is deeper. The vantage point which is most deep is the analysis of human beings as suffering beings. When their attention is restricted to a transient and relative reality they can never escape from this realm of suffering. Once they understand and become one with a deeper level of reality, once they attain this standpoint of enlightenment,

then they will be able to realise true freedom and they will find that this ground is the ground on which all transient pleasures are actually founded.

So that is the structure of emancipatory critiques. Emancipatory discourse is so common to all human aspirations. Consider western liberal thought. Let us take Rousseau. Rousseau says man is born free but is everywhere in chains, so immediately he says that man's essential nature is to be free, but something happens when he or she grows up and they become imprisoned in chains. That is society. Chomsky says we all have at birth the innate capacity to generate an infinite number of sentences, most of which we will never generate, so what happens to our creativity? Somewhere it is stunted along the line. He also says some other interesting things. We all have at birth the capacity to learn any language. So if you were in Japan now your first language would be Japanese, but you'd be just as you are now genetically, you would not have to have anything else different: same parents, same everything else, but if you were in a Japanese society you would learn Japanese. He says something even more radical—that you do not even have to learn language. You think you teach people language, actually language grows in them, it is natural. So if you are a parent or a teacher, do not take any pride in your teaching what is a natural process. So these are all examples of emancipatory, demystifying projects drawn from the present and the past, and east and west alike.

I have already talked about Marx, but let us go back to Marx for a moment. His vision of a communist society as a society in which the free development of each was the condition of the free development of all actually presupposes a society in which your development is as important to me as my own. That is a wonderful ideal isn't it? It is an ideal that we have not actualised. What that must mean is that we must potentially, implicitly be beings who are capable of sustaining such a society. That is the wonderful thing, that this is an implicit potential within us. What that statement of Marx means is that deep down inside us we could be those beings. The Buddha says that we could all be enlightened because deep

down inside us we have that potential. So this is the structure of emancipatory discourses.

Looking at ontology the first thing that critical realism said was that ontology includes everything. That is everything is within being. That means that contradictions are within being, that illusions are within being, that category mistakes are within being. So what does it mean to say that illusion is within being? To say that a belief is false or illusory is to say that there is no object in the real world that corresponds to it, but it is not to say the belief itself is not real. Illusory beliefs can be causally efficacious because you can believe something absurd, you can believe something that is wrong and you can act on that belief and you can have a causal effect on the world. For example, you can believe that we are all separate and there is actually no connection between us and you can go your own way and sooner or later you find out that you actually depend on everyone else. Someone might think well, I can actually escape from this world, I can go to the Himalayas and sit there in bliss, or someone might say, I can build a spaceship and go to the moon, or someone might say it does not matter what I do, what fuels I burn in my house, I will be alright. But of course they will not—because we are all interconnected, we are living in an era of global interconnection and crisis and if that ideal of a purely individual salvation ever made sense it certainly does not make sense now. Just to give you one very striking fact, the average height of Bangladesh is four feet above sea level. This means that it is in perilous crisis this century, and so are all the islands of the world, and if this is not a crisis I do not know what is. We do not just have to go to ecological trends, we can look at some of the events that are taking place on the world stage now and we know that two or three individuals in their own action can destabilise the whole world. We are all globally interconnected. I am not talking about particular individuals, they may be government leaders, they may be isolated individuals, they may be organised individuals, it does not really matter. The point is that we are living in global interdependence. Illusions then can actually be causally efficacious in reality.

I want to turn now to the term 'self' in self-realisation. What is the self? Just think about that for a moment. What I want to argue is that the self is actually a tripartite concept. There are three components to the self: one which is illusory, the second which is transient or relative, and the third which is fundamental and absolute. The illusory part of the self I am going to call the ego. It is that sense we have of ourselves as separate and cut off from the rest of creation, that sense of my separate identity against yours. That sense that in some way I can exist independently of you and that you are not a part of me and that in some way my well being does not depend on your well being. That is the ego. Western philosophy and our contemporary society is structured around the idea of the individual self which possesses. And this individual possessive self stands in possessive, instrumental relation to an object world which is outside himself. And he even treats himself in a manipulative, instrumental way. This object world is the domain of his instrumental manipulative, calculating reasoning. The contrast is between the individual ego and the world outside the individual ego. We can already see how much the currency of our everyday discourse this is. We all think that we have got possessions, we all have a job, we all have two cars, you have a ticket to Australia or Japan and you are going to have a nice holiday, you are thinking of yourself as this thing distinct from the rest of the world. Of course you are part of the rest of the world, and also you can affect yourself more and more easily than the rest of the world, so do not forget yourself. That is the ego, that is the sense of separateness that we have, and that is an illusion and to be free we have to get rid of it. And you can see that Marx is presupposing a society in which we do get rid of it. You can also say the Buddhist ideal, that of the Bodhisattva, is presupposing a society in which individual enlightenment is postponed for the sake of universal enlightenment. You can actually say that there is no other position which is consistent with Buddha's position than this position because otherwise the ego, that is the individual self, in some way exists and has priority over other beings. This standpoint of Mahayana Buddhism is actually

the only standpoint which I believe is consistent with the Buddha's teaching and it is a very interestingly convergent with the standpoint reached from the secular position of Marx.

That is the first part of the self, the ego, the sense that we are separate. The second part of the self is a relative reality, that is a transient reality. What is this? This is the self as an embodied personality. Embodied personalities we certainly are, this is a fact, we are all embodied. As embodied personalities, however, we are going to die. As embodied personalities we grow, physically, emotionally, and mentally and our powers and interests wax and wane; it is relative and transient. We also know that some people seem to have more skills than others, that as personalities we differ. Of course some people as embodied personalities are apparently far richer than others. So this is a world of relative and transient reality. This reality is itself triplex because we have to look at its mental, emotional and physical constituents. We have to in philosophy understand the emotions. For a long time the emotions have not been theorised in philosophical discourse, they have been squeezed out between the mind and body. This is very interesting because mind and body both represent aspects in which men have regarded themselves as being superior. Men have prided themselves that they have the stronger bodies, but you can ask a man: when did you last give birth to a baby?—isn't that a clever thing for a woman to be able to do? Does that not require just as great a strength as being able to dig a few more pounds of coal? So actually it does not really matter, we need not go into this ideology of chauvinism, we need not go into the whole ideology of how philosophy has left out the discourse of the emotions. But just consider this, so long as I am attached to anything outside myself then there is something within me that will be unfulfilled, because there is something to which I am attached which is not going to be a part of me. So to be free you have to be totally free. If I have a car I cannot take it with me when I die. You can work this out for yourself: what part of your relative reality is essential to you? Actually many people would define themselves in relation to their material possessions. Just think about—all of

this is only to facilitate an open discussion – what is essential to your reality, and then you will find what you need to liberate. If you find that every other human being is essential to your reality then you will need to free every other human being, every other being in the world. That is the embodied personality. Now this is a relative reality, the absolute reality I am going to call the transcendentally real self. This is one's innermost being. This is the first feature of this new development of critical realism.

The second feature is that it allows that possibilities and powers are just as real as actualities. If you have a possibility, that is real. How can you do anything, how can you actualise anything unless the possibility, the thought if you like, was real as well. So this is what I call dispositional realism. Even the analysis of laws as tendencies presupposes the priority of powers to their actualisation because a law will operate even when it is not actualised. That means that the level of the law which operates, the level of power or potentiality, is more basic than the level of actuality. The third aspect is categorial realism: there, our categories, our ways of thinking of the world, are themselves part of the world, they constitute the world. That should be pretty obvious by now. The fourth is a realism about truth. If there is, as we have seen, a false theory, it presupposes a true theory; then there must be something in reality which is that true theory. This is the level of analysis of truth at which we have to presuppose the truth as real. This is the level of alethic reality. So if I talk about what is the reality behind this water being drinkable, the reality behind it is that it is constituted by a certain molecular structure H_2O. That is the inner reality, the inner truth of this glass. Two glasses could look exactly the same but if one has that molecular structure and the other doesn't, then they are going to have different properties and effects.

What I have been calling the transcendentally real self is similar to what people talk about when they talk about their innermost being, their inner nature, when they talk about their higher or better self. Actually what these emancipatory projects all presuppose is that we have such a higher self, but though

this higher self is not actualised in our embodied personality, in some way it is implicit as a potentiality. This implicit potentiality I call our *ground state*. Let us talk about the universe, that is the universe as a whole. We are part of the universe, so we, in our ground-state—this is that state without which no other states could exist—must be constituted by what is ultimate and essential to the universe, at least in part. So what is ultimate and essential in the universe must also be ingredient within us. This defines part of our ground-state, part of our innermost being. Now your innermost being may be concretely singularised and different from mine, that is absolutely true, but whatever it is that we have, there is something we have in common, and that something must be what is fundamental to the universe or part of the universe as well, because otherwise you would not be part of the universe. But when you think about it everything in the universe, every being in the universe, also has a ground-state, otherwise we would not be in one universe. So each being in the universe has a ground-state. Let us imagine these ground-states of the universe, all connected, like beads on a string, bound, strung together. Let us see them as being connected in what I will call the *cosmic envelope*. This is that envelope which connects the ground-states of all beings. Remember we are all connected and interdependent, bound together as parts of one universe, a uni-verse.

Let us talk a little bit about *transcendence*. This may seem a very mysterious term, a sort of magical term, or a term that belongs only to temples or retreats, but actually transcendental identification and transcendence is always a question of unity, unity with oneself or unity with something outside oneself, transcendental identification is absolutely basic to life. This means that non-duality is absolutely basic to life. I am also going to argue that non-dual action or transcendental action is absolutely essential to life. This is where the argument becomes more important to follow and understand closely. If transcendence is or involves a state of non-duality, a state of being at one with your context, then there are two immediate ways in which one can achieve a state of transcendence. One is by retreating from the object world and being

one with oneself. One loses all consciousness of what is outside oneself. That is retreat from objectivity into subjectivity. The other is where you lose your subjectivity and merge or fuse into an objectivity. Thus, you can be engulfed, overawed by the sound of beautiful music or the sight of beautiful scenery, mountains, lakes, trees. You can lose yourself. There is no-one I am sure who has not had those experiences of transcendental identification, in which you just lose your sense of your separate identity and become one with the music, become one with the beautiful mountain. That is transcendental identification with some being other than yourself. Let us see how common this is.

When you understand or even hear my words then you are one with those words. When you are thinking about being those words then you are not. When you are trying to work out these words then you are not at one with those words. But when you say to your friend, hello, how are you, and she immediately says fine, spontaneously, then you have immediately identified with one another. There is no gulf there. What I say immediately becomes one with you. So transcendental identification is essential to any communicative act. Of course there can be a block in identification, but when we get over the block then we have an immediate unity again.

To move now from the field of relationships between beings to the field of action. When you know how to drive a car you just drive a car. When you know how to speak a language you just speak a language, when you know how to cook you just cook. So imagine that everything is seen in terms of a process of thought. You might think about what you are going to cook for dinner tonight, and then you might think about how you are going to cook it, but at some point you just have to cook it. You may think, I am going to put on my shoes, at some point you just have to put on your shoes. When you reach that point of spontaneous, what I call basic, action, then you are in a state of non-duality because you are totally focused on that particular act. Unless we were in a transcendental or non-dual state we could not do anything at all. If you continually think about doing something you will never do it,

but even that thinking is an act which is a non-dual act. If I am speaking now, if I start to think about how I am speaking then I would probably lose my flow and then I won't be speaking. So really everything we do involves or presupposes transcendental agency. This is transcendence in action. We know from sport, for example, that if a cricketer starts to think before he receives the ball about the stroke that he is going to hit, then he will not hit it; we know that if a golfer starts to think about the putt he is going to make, so that he is not one with the activity, then he will miss the putt. We know that a footballer faced with the easiest goal will, in imagining the glory, miss the goal. You know that it is very easy to walk down the stairs, but if you start thinking about it then you will probably fall. This is why Krishna told Arjuna, do not think about the consequences, just focus on your action, you are a brilliant archer, you can shoot an arrow in any direction if you just focus. So if you are single-pointed on your activity, if you are focused on your activity, then you will do what you can do easily and naturally. And of course the range of skills that we can demonstrate in a non-dualistic way grows the whole time. As we grow up we learn how to cook, we learn how to put on our own clothes, we learn how to drive, and lots of other things. Sometimes, of course, we forget these things or our powers go away. But whatever it is, at some point, insofar as we are agents at all, we have to act basically, spontaneously and non-dualistically.

The fourth concept of transcendence is that in which two or more people function so perfectly together as a team that they can anticipate each other's behaviour, and are at one with each other in their activity. For example, in a good football team one player will anticipate the move of another. These are four concepts of transcendence we are all familiar with and we all touch. The two that we must immediately activate in social life for anything else to happen are transcendental identification with another being and transcendental action or agency which, if you like, is accessing a power or skill that you already have within yourself and without such access you couldn't do anything at all.

Let us go back to the ground-state and the cosmic envelope. In virtue of being a being in a universe, every being in a universe has a ground-state. In virtue of my capacity to identify with every being in the universe, it follows that I am potentially implicitly one with them all. When I say my capacity, I don't mean me personally, everyone can identify with anything else. You might think you can only identify with other human beings, but actually you will find that is not true. You can identify with pets, if you see a species being destroyed you will probably react because you think it terrible, and then you are one with that species which is being destroyed. You can identify with a mountain, or anything else. Zen Buddhist monks actually practised identifying with ordinary or even ugly things, like the corner of a room or a broom, and you can become one with them if you try hard enough. So you can potentially transcendentally identify with everything in the universe. Now when you transcendentally identify with something then you are at one with them in your consciousness, and being at one with them in consciousness means that they must be implicitly conscious. They must contain implicit consciousness. This suggests a way in which we can resolve an old dispute between idealists who have seen consciousness as primary and materialists who have seen matter as primary. From this point of view the argument may sound a bit idealistic, everything being implicitly conscious because I can transcendentally identify with it. But from this point of view we can equally see matter as having started at a specific point with a particular atom or a big bang, and then eventually after millions of years we have the earth and then the material things on the earth which give rise to animate beings and organic life, and organic life gives rise to consciousness. But that potential for consciousness must have been implicit from the beginning otherwise it would never have been actualised. And that explains how, within the context of a unified world view, it is possible for me to feel one with a tree. Actually it is very easy and a very good thing to try and identify with a tree – we can do this in our imagination or we can reach out to it and hug it, that is, in our physical being or agency, not

only our consciousness. I can become one with a mountain, a rock, there is no limit to what we can become one with. This is the first thing then. Everything that exists in the world is implicitly conscious, even though it is not explicitly conscious.

The second thing is that, if I can transcendentally identify with everything in the world, then I can identify with everything in the world in my consciousness. That means that everything in the world is implicitly enfolded within me, i.e. that I and you implicitly contain everything in the world. If this line of argument is correct, this means that you are implicit in me and this means that if I hurt you or harm you then the harm in you is also in me because you are in me. Implicitly it is in me. And that is the origin of karma. When you create a hurt in the world, that seems to be outside you. But that thing outside you, which certainly exists outside you, is also implicit, enfolded within you, because you have the possibility of being one with that. Implicitly that thing is one with you and therefore the hurt you have done to it is there enfolded within you. And to be free you would have to shed that hurt. If we talk about freedom, we would have to say that anything which was inconsistent with our ground-state, with what we essentially are, would block or impede our freedom. So if there is a hurt in some other being and that is implicit within me, then that is a block or impediment to my freedom, as much as it is to theirs. This takes us away from karma to the ideal of a eudemonistic society, because it means that I cannot be free so long as you are unfree or in pain. This is the way in which one argues that we do already, just as we are constituted, without moving an inch, contain within us everything that is needed for a good society, because if we all—through our capacity to transcendentally identify with other beings, which we have seen is essential to communication, and by extending our argument to a whole host of other activities—contain the whole totality within ourselves, then we cannot be free in an isolated way. We must be committed to our freedom becoming universal self-realisation, to the freedom of all. This is where Marx's vision of the eudemonistic society, coming from a completely secular, avowedly non-spiritual and explicitly atheist point of view is an ideal which is worth thinking about.

If it looks as if this is leading to some very spiritual things, I want to suggest to you a way in which this standpoint is consistent with all faiths and no faiths. The fundamental categories of this standpoint are:

> this tripartite analysis of the self;
> the fact that we have a ground-state and every being in the universe has a ground-state;
> that we can and must engage in transcendental identification, that is in non-dual states of being and in non-dual action, if we are to do anything at all;
> and that every being in the universe is enfolded or implicit within us.

I am going to cite a poem from the Sufi poet, Rumi.

> *Not Christian or Jew or Muslim*
> *Not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen,*
> *Not any religion or cultural system*
> *I am not from the east or the west*
> *Not out of the ocean or up from the ground*
> *Not natural or ethereal*
> *Not composed of elements at all*
> *I do not exist*
> *Am not an entity in this world or the next*
> *Did not descend from Adam or Eve*
> *Or any origin story*
> *My place is placeless a trace of the traceless*
> *Neither body or soul*
> *I belong to the beloved*
> *Seeing the two worlds as one*
> *And that one call to and know*
> *First last outer inner only that breath breathing human being*

This vision is consistent with not believing in God at all, not practising any faith, or it is consistent with having your own faith. All it depends on is the fact that we are all bound up together within what I have called the cosmic envelope

and that non-duality or transcendence is a fact that is essential for social life.

The implication of this is really that I cannot be free as a human being if there are elements within me, as I am constituted in my actual embodied personality, which are inconsistent with my transcendentally real self. And if this is so, then I am always going to feel some tension, some unease, some inner conflict, and this will always press in on myself, I will not be able to be happy, to be fulfilled, to be one with myself while I feel this unease. And this sense of unease will block and thwart me. So anything which is inconsistent with your transcendentally real self will always create a tension. If the ego is not real, if there is no ego, then believing in the ego and in your own separate identity is also going to create a tension. These are at the level of your embodied personality. But when you go deeper, when you have a growing awareness of your transcendentally real self, you will find that you will expand by shedding everything that is heteronomous, everything that is inconsistent with what you really are, becoming only and completely, or as completely as possible, what you essentially are.

So long as there is any element of heteronomy, any unfulfilled intentionality, any attachment, any fixation within you, your freedom will be to that extent restricted. You cannot be completely free, in the sense of unconstrained, if you have what I call negative incompleteness. Although once you are free from internal constraints, that is negatively complete, there is no foreseeable end to your further empowerment (that is to the elimination of your positive incompleteness, which is the hallmark only of all the things you could be and do—learn bookbinding or ballet, go to Sweden or Peru), to all the possibilities of developing, exploring, enjoying more of the open world which we live in.

The important point to appreciate is that until you have shed attachment, which means also conditionality and instrumentality, until your every act is a spontaneous gift, not a contractual or conditional exchange, let alone a calculative, manipulative exploitation, you will still be unfree because there

will be something, an attachment, that is binding you to the world. Similarly, if your intentionality is unfulfilled and that unfulfilled intentionality is part of you, clinging to you like a desire or fear, then you still will not be free

When you are free, or as you approach freedom, as an embodied personality you will have a growing sense of being at one with the whole world This is what I have called implicit enfolding of other beings within yourself, and as it becomes more and more central to your consciousness, you will not be able to feel free until every being is free. In a way what was implicit in your consciousness has now become explicit, you have made your unity with the whole of creation a part of your innermost being.

How can you do this? How can you become free? How can you become an agent of freedom or emancipation? The only way you can do it is by acting on yourself. We have seen that what you implicitly are, and what your real freedom explicitly presupposes is precisely the standpoint of a eudemonistic society, a good society, a flourishing society, a society where the free development of each was a condition of the free development of all. What can be more selfless than that? But, this is the peculiar paradox, the only way you can act, ever act, is through yourself. You can only act through or in virtue of your embodied personality. So I cannot act in you, I can only act through myself and then I cannot free you. I can unlock the door, but you have to walk out. Emancipation or freedom is not something that can be imposed from without. Every embodied personality has to free themselves.

Not only can I not free you, but I cannot even teach you anything. If I get up and prove a theorem in logic or in mathematics on the board and you do not see or get, i.e. understand the proof, how do I force you? How do I force you to see the proof, there is no way of forcing you to see the proof, you just have to see it. You know how difficult it is to get someone to change their mind. Imagine a student trying to please the teacher and attempting to pass an examination by learning by rote. The teachers then say to their students, don't do any revision before the exam, just relax. This presupposes

that that knowledge is really a part of themselves. Actually we all know that revision is pretty essential, but that is because we have not made the knowledge our own. How do we do this? The condition of any learning is that the knowledge is in some way implicit in us, we must recognise it, see it, get it. Once we have got it, then we must play with it, toy with it, shape it, understand everything you can do with it until finally you become a master of it. Now it is explicitly part of your innermost being, you can spontaneously apply it anywhere, wherever and whenever you like. This is like the process of learning to drive a car. Now I see how you control the pedal, how the wheel turns. You then practise and it becomes a part of you. The implicit has become explicit and is re-internalised as a learned part of your innermost being.

The only way you can act is by acting through yourself. This is what I call the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality. It is not just a theme of eastern thought. It is a theme of western thought as well, and in the tradition of ancient Egypt it is known as the Hermetic tradition. Being in your ground-state entails then a commitment to universal self-realisation, that is the eudemonistic society, to the free development of each as a condition of the free development of all. That is total non-egoism, it is a standpoint which could be called that of practical mysticism.

This in a peculiar way is the most non-egoistic, therefore non-individualistic philosophy you could ever have. So you have to embrace a seeming paradox, a seeming contradiction which is no contradiction, no paradox: that is, while you could only act in the world from your embodied personality, you must act <u>in</u> consistency with your transcendentally real self, your ground-state (and thus in coherence with the rest of the cosmic envelope), that is <u>for</u> universal self-realisation. So that while you can only act through yourself, you will act for everything (including yourself). When your action is coming from your ground-state you will see no preference for your own development over the development and freedom of any other being in the universe. First your consciousness will expand to include all the members of your family or all the members of

your society or collectivity, then to the whole human race, then to all beings on the planet, and then to all beings in the universe. Our point of action is our embodied personality. The more our ground-state informs our embodied personality, the more self-aware we are, and the more we act in the interests of the free development of each and all, ultimately the self-realisation of every being in the cosmos, the whole of creation.

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I am reminded of a Zen koan now. The position that I am trying to get you to see is a position which is in a way beyond thought. The Zens liked to practice, on the one hand, mindfulness, which is focused activity, and on the other hand, inner-emptiness, which could also be called 'mindlessness', that is a position beyond thought. Mindfulness is actually the path to mindlessness, effortless, spontaneous, contextually appropriate, right-action. To get to this state we need to understand the limitations of the mind, as well as to transcend thought in the practices and disciplines of our expertise; and we need to let go of attachment to the mind and its contents as such, to subvert it, along with our ego's, our emotional attachments and so on. The Zens were given koans in order to help this process of subversion. These koans stretch people to the limits of thought. One koan which I am reminded of was: 'what is the sound of one hand clapping?' The solution is to stretch your thought until you see that one hand cannot clap. In fact one hand cannot exist. To be is to be related, that is really what I am saying. To be in this way is to be materially embodied, practically engaged, and is to be oriented to social and indeed universal self-realisation. Similarly, this talk is not mine, it is ours, everything we do, you and me and everyone else, is always a holistic performance, a joint production, a universal, indeed cosmic, creation.

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I was wondering if you can very directly connect this notion of liberated free individuals with collectivities which have all kinds of problems of control, exploitation, and so on.

These have been only a few very fundamental orienting remarks. Every social event takes place in what I have earlier called four-planar social being. That is it always involves four aspects. Everything you do involves a material transaction with nature, there is nothing you do which does not involve a transaction, an exchange of energy with the material world. Everything you do involves social interaction with another human being. This is the second plane or dimension in terms of which any social event has to be understood. A third level or dimension in terms of which any social event has to be understood is social structure. Social structures are things like economies, language and so forth. What is the relationship then between social structures and human agency. Social structures pre-exist human agents. We never create the world from scratch. There are things which pre-exist us but they do not exist independently of human agency. What human agents do is reproduce or transform them. They are autonomous constraints. So we cannot possibly be free while we have oppressive social structures around us. The fourth dimension in which any social event has to be understood is the stratification of the personality. So we are always involved on four fronts: exchanges with nature, transactions with other people, relationships with social structures, things that we have not created but which do not exist independently of our human activity, and ourselves, i.e. in relation to the stratification of our personalities.

So how do we stand with the social structures that we want to understand and change. These social structures are things which we think are out there. That is true because we do not create them. Let us take arranged marriages for example. This system actually pre-exists

any generation or sets of generations, it exists before anyone is born. But it can only be sustained in virtue of the ongoing activities of those agents. Otherwise it does not exist any more. Let me give another example. Capitalism, which we all know is an enormous social force. How can capitalism keep going without desires, without greed, without pride, without fear, without all these negative emotions which actually sustain it. If you suddenly decide, well you don't really need to buy anything, you can grow everything yourself. Suppose it was possible to do that individually, then what could capitalism do? Capitalism has to have people who have desires and who have or feel that they need to have washing machines, cars and other consumer durables. Then capitalism has to have agents who have pride, who feel that they have an important job and are fearful of losing them. Capitalism cannot survive without jealousy. It has to make me jealous of you because you have a bigger house or you have a warm and wonderful husband or whatever. Capitalism cannot survive without these negative emotions. (What else can capitalism not survive without?) What that means is that social structures are not just out there; they are also in here. The social structures in here, in us, are inherent in and through us. We carry the social structure through our activities. This is what the philosopher and social scientist Bourdieu has called the habitus of social life. The social structure flows through us. We start to change it when we disconnect the supply lines from within.

But there is an even more powerful consideration. The social structure of capitalism, whether or not you accept Marx's analysis that it depends on unpaid labour, actually depends on the free creativity and love of human beings. It could not exist for a moment without it. If I go into a shop and I buy a newspaper and the newsagent gives me the paper, that act is predicated on the fact that I am not going to turn and run. It is predicated on trust.

Consider any social form that we do not like, that we find objectionable. War would be something that most

of us abhor, but how could war, a terrible thing involving violence, aggression, killing, slaughter, how could war for a moment survive without the solidarity of soldiers at the front? How could it survive without the support of the wives and sisters and daughters at home? So the tacit presupposition of all these negative social structures, whether they be capitalism, whether they be war, is the spontaneous good nature of our own inner selves, operating from the ground-state, our spontaneous creativity, our natural love, our willingness to trust other beings.

The whole possibility of human emancipation depends on an asymmetry which I am going to call the asymmetry of emancipation, but it is an asymmetry inherent in action. That oppression, and those oppressive social structures could not exist without the free creativity, the non-dual spontaneous activity coming from our ground-state. But we could exist and survive and flourish as human beings, as embodied personalities, just being consistent with our ground-state. We could do very well, thank you, without those oppressive systems. So the oppressive systems that are destroying our planet and that are also inherent within us can be shed and we will survive, indeed flourish, expand and grow, become free. But they could not exist for a moment without us. So this asymmetry is the asymmetry on which the possibility of human emancipation depends.

Never forget that we, and the best part of ourselves, always have the upper hand. Because the best part of ourselves is the deepest part of ourselves and all the negativity, oppression, social structures that you abhor could not survive for a moment without it. Just think of a capitalist production line or any production line. It is always going wrong, so it actually depends on more than unpaid labour or the extraction of surplus value; it depends on the spontaneous creativity of people to keep the whole line going. You can take as an example questions of women's domestic labour, the reproduction of labour power, that is unpaid, that is also free, that is also

unconditionally given, spontaneously given. I am not sanctioning that because in our society that is a sign of demerit. If something is unpaid, it is regarded as being of no value and that is a terrible thing. But actually the free loving, spontaneity of any human being, say of a parent for a child, is the paradigm of what we could all be. It is a sort of punctuated prefiguration of the future. We could all be like that, we could all be spontaneous, unconditional, giving, we could all be focused in our activity. Yet we could not do anything else, we could not sustain evil, oppression, unless we were also capable of non-dual action. Unless there was love, solidarity, loyalty, comradeship, at some level and in some respect, to some degree, a band of robbers could not hang together, they just have to trust each other (and it is at that level, respect or degree on which the very success of their otherwise nefarious doings depends). I would challenge you when you go home, to look at any social situation you deplore and you will see how it ultimately depends at some level, however warped its manifestation, on love, creativity, and other properties of the ground-states of human beings. Without these fundamental features of human being you could not survive.

I am really struck with the complete absence of any mention of psychoanalysis in your discourse. And on that I have two questions. This search for unity sounds very trans-historical. When you said that the transcendental, unity and non duality is the basis of life, I would make this statement in a different way, the transcendental, unity and non-duality is not the basis of life but is the universe. The basis of life is separateness. In that sense the very idea of unity emerges only when we are separated. The idea of unity can emerge and can sustain you only when you are separated. Therefore this identification is never beyond dualism but beyond duality, being scientific about reality we get back to the problem of dualism. By the very answer of unity. My second question, the question of mind and body, again

concerns separation and dualism. Again, this mind and body unity at the absolute level is never inter-relationship. The inter connectedness is always one step before that absoluteness. The desperate search to have this unity of body and mind is still struggling with the realm of dualism or duality. At that level I find it very difficult to separate between dualism and duality.

The first thing I need to stress, is that we can never be in a position of total non-duality. We can be non-dual beings, but we have to act in a world of duality. We have the mind, we have language, we are living in a growing and developing environment and we are always going to have to think and speak. Then, supposing we are in a state of consciousness and we want to talk about that state of consciousness, we immediately, if that state was a non-dual state, have to be in a dual state. The dual state is structured in terms of subject-object non-identity. This is forced on us by the world in which we live. We are all embodied personalities, I am separate from her, I am separate from you. Yet, at a deep level, the level of our ground-state, we are inseparably connected. But we are nevertheless separate, and so long as we are separate, so long as we are talking about the physically embodied world, then we must always think in terms of having to use things which will involve dualistic modes. For example thought, speech and song. Putting forward the possibility of a level of consciousness which is non-dual and showing how that non-duality is manifest in action and in identification with other beings actually presupposes separateness, and the separateness is a fact of the physical world in which we live.[1]

Something that is wrong with your argument is that you are interpreting me as if I am trying to put a stop to

[1] However, we can recursively embed that dual action within our non-dual being, i.e. our being defined by our transcendental unity with our ground-states.

change, and I am not. Other people may have thought that now we have this unity then everything stops. But the first thing is that this unity is not an identity. This unity respects the singularity and difference of individuals. So I am not saying that everyone should be the same. In order for me to really be as committed to your development as my own I have to become or be a part of you or I have to have you as a part of me. But you are different. This is not a belief. You see Marx also got this right. He said that a communist society would not be a society in which everyone was equal, we will not treat everyone the same—why? Because everyone is different, people are different. If you treat everyone the same when people are different, that is wrong. So you will treat everyone according to the specificity of their differences. The concrete universal that I was elaborating respects this. It says as human beings there is something we all have in common. We also have lots of things different, coming from different histories, different geographies, so we have different trajectories, different points where we got to, where we are. After all that we have our concrete singularities, our unique idiosyncrasies. There are no two flowers that are the same. I believe that there are no two tigers in India, or ever have been, which have had exactly the same markings. Everywhere in nature we have a great diversity. One of the worst things that is happening on the planet now is the decimation of species: the more species we have the better. I want to emphasise the value of singularity and difference. To say that everyone should be in their dharma, is to say that everyone's uniqueness, everyone's special nature will be valued. No two people are the same so what two people are doing in this ideal society that I am drawing a picture of will always be different and how they feel will always be different.

The third mistake is to think that this ideal society means that everything has come to a stop. Rather, our creative possibilities can soar. This will be change, this will be a society, there will be people who are free to

grow, to embrace change, who will want to develop, who will want to expand. There are so many things I cannot do, I do not know how to bind books, how to do x, y, z, I want to do all those things, but then I will discover whole new possibilities, areas which we have never even dreamt of, and everyone will be in a situation in which they will be free, not only to create new things, but to create new modes of creation that are not dreamt of. This would be like the end of pre-history and the beginning of real history, and real history is change in time.

To embrace change is as important as embracing totality. Psychoanalysis has pointed out that we have unconscious, subconscious motivations. We cannot be free so long as we have motivations that are unconscious, that we have not eliminated. So when Freud said, and he was using the term in a different way, that where there was id there should be ego, which is more like an equivalent of my transcendentally real self, what he meant was that we should replace all those unconscious determinations that constrain or impinge on us, he was trying to bring the unconscious to the level of consciousness and we have to do this to be free. So long as we have a hidden resentment, say against our father, that is burning within us we are not going to be free. So psychoanalysis can be brought on board. But whether the techniques of psychoanalysis are the best ways of getting rid of these unconscious residues, and which techniques, is another question. Similarly, when I use Marx as an example, I am not condoning all aspects of Marx's writings or theories, let alone (this should be clear) the practice of subsequent Marxists. Marx himself said, as you all know, I am not a Marxist. Freud was a great innovator, he discovered a new ocean, a new sea, a new territory, a new continent. We all have to be aware of that. That must be part, that is part, of the stratification of the personality. There is the unconscious.

If we think of the lessons of psychoanalysis not only in terms of ego, super-ego and id, but in terms of life force and death wish, then the dream of absolute is built into our existence, our be ing. But the impossibility of that dream is also built into our being, in the sense that the emancipatory discourses based on the dream of absolute are impossible since we are embodied.

It is not impossible because it you understand the features of our embodied personality, then you will understand that there are always going to be limits. Even the physical structure of our world places limits on our possibilities. There is a theorem in mathematical logic that for any finite set of descriptions there are an infinite number of descriptions compatible with it; for any finitude in the world, there are an infinite number of possibilities consistent in it. So we can have an infinity, unbounded possibilities within a world which is constrained, finite, which has laws. We know that eventually this planet will fall into the sun and the sun will collapse into a black hole; but within that time span we can have infinite possibilities. Within the separation between two beings, say human beings separated by physical laws, within that separation there can be endless possibilities of expansive union. So I do not believe that the absolute or the infinite is impossible to accommodate within the finite. And I believe that can be shown in logic and mathematics. But more importantly, you can begin to realise that in your everyday life. And even the beginning to realise it, cutting those social structural cords which loop through us, is making a move in that direction.

I think it was Foucault who stated that a murderer must be hanged for his own safety. And if a murderer has to be hanged for his own safety then surely we are talking about a very dif ferent human nature, or a human nature which has a different aspect to that which you have been portraying. You have surely

given us some insights into human nature; but this is power-hungry, requires security, requires some clinging to a collectivity and imposes all sorts of controlling do's and don'ts. I am with id's super-ego to a large extent which is also struggling the super-ego, so there are lots of do's and don'ts and Mr Jekyll and Dr Hyde in the whole process. When a murderer has to be hanged for his own safety then these negative kinds of emotions seem more universal than you would like us to believe. What someone here was trying to say is that we all suffer through intrinsic separateness, violence, identity crises, rupture, which your kind of discourse is trying to overcome. But then in your kind of discourse one requires such emancipated self-contained, assured human beings that they do not need assurance from the collectivity, and as soon as you need assurance from the collectivity, this emancipation, liberation, freedom, collapses.

These negative emotions that I am talking about are real. You cannot just wish them away. Because I have argued that we are in fact those beings that emancipatory theories implicitly presuppose, I am not trying to say that the struggle for emancipation is going to be an easy one. Actually just working on a single emotion like jealousy, anger or pride is an immensely difficult thing. And I would think that there are very few people who do not have some emotional difficulties, probably none who have no emotional issues to work on. They are real and also I have to say that they all have a positive function, this is a dialectical view. In some situations you need to build up someone's ego. If someone has been smashed into the ground you need to say look, stand up for yourself, fight for yourself, fight against the world, battle, we will support you. This is what has been called translative spirituality or emancipation. This is designed to boost the ego. The fundamental truth is this: that without self-esteem, unless you love yourself, you cannot love anyone else. Actually you can argue that your capacity for love in any dimensional circle of love depends on the

degree of your own self-love. If you do not love yourself you cannot love anyone else. And if you do not recognise yourself, and in the first instance in this materially embodied world this means assert, and believe and feel your own specialness, if you do not assert and affirm that and feel it then you must build that up. Some people have no fear and that is terrible because they will go and do the most foolhardy things. Fear is a very natural response. If you are in the presence of a snake you feel fear immediately and spontaneously and that is a natural biological function. When it becomes pathological is when you will not sit down until you have examined every corner of a room looking for the snake. Then we think it has gone too far. Pride too has its useful functions. We do not have any of these emotions without a function. Let us see what this implies for action.

You talk about Foucault saying you are hanging a man for his own sake. Well let us leave aside the 'own sake' because I think that is gratuitous. If you have hanged him then he might survive as a soul and you might be saying you are trying to do some good for his soul, but Foucault is not saying that so I don't know where 'own sake' comes in. Hanging, killing, is killing ever justified? This is an old question. If someone accosts someone else and I want to stop that murder, it may be that the only way I can do it is by killing him. Does that mean that I am a bad person? No. To go back to the *Bhaghavad-Gita*, Krishna tells Arjuna it is your duty to kill, to slay your kin. And of course if we have a social system in which someone is doing something terrible, and the only way to stop that action is by killing him, then kill him we must. But let us not pretend that we are killing him for his own sake, unless we then accept the whole theory of the immortality of the soul and reincarnation.[5] I may be happy to accept this but it does not come into the bounds

[5] And then it is a very dangerous thing for human beings to try and usurp the function of discharging karma.

of this discourse at the moment because we are saying it is a spiritual discourse which is consistent with all faiths or no faiths. But I can argue about the immortality of the soul or what can be said for and against reincarnation some other time. So does this mean that to kill someone you have to feel hatred and anger, of course not. Krishna is telling Arjuna: do not feel angry, because if you were angry or tearful, then you will not be able to shoot your arrow directly at his heart. You do not feel any emotion, you just focus. Perhaps a hangman feels no emotion at all.

The positive points are very well taken in this question. Which is that all the negative emotions and the ego have their place and that there is a dialectic, we are working towards a goal, and this goal is within us, is there. And we will not stop until we reach it. The terrible thing is that we can destroy ourselves as a species long before we have reached it, and that is why I am talking in this way now. For I think that it is only by moving in this direction that we can survive as a species on this planet, because we are hurtling towards destruction on all those planes of social being. I would be happy if we survived as a species on this planet. Now if you believe in the immortality of the soul then you can argue that we will go to another planet or build another world, and that may be true. But still, no-one who has ever believed in a deeply spiritual way about the immortality of the soul has said that we should neglect our body, our planet, our host planet. As physical beings we have to respect our body. If you want to be spiritual our body is our temple, the temple of our transcendentally real self, we must respect and honour it and respect and honour the planetary environment in which our body lives and of which it is a part.

The propositions contained in your talk perhaps pertain to a model of action which seems to contradict much of what we teach in terms of social intervention. If you have to intervene

you first have to work on yourself and the universal element paradoxically leads us to the most individual intervention and if that were to be so, what sort of social work do we do – because the type of social work that we do is based on objectivity as well as on the condition that you are part of the larger scheme of things, in the way you say. If that were the case it would be very nice, as we are an open house here, to look forward to some of your writings articulating your new philosophy with its emphasis on transcendence, non-duality and co-presence. We would request you to point to or indicate what sort of intervention we should make on the basis of the philosophy you are developing. Secondly, we would appreciate it if you could clearly demarcate your positions from the traditional positions of either dualistic or non-dualistic Hinduism. And one more step would be if you could also differentiate your position from the different schools of Buddhism.

None of this is designed to stop you acting and start to replace it with working on yourself. You have to work on yourself in activity. There is no point in working on your jealousy outside a situation in which your jealousy is going to operate. Being engaged in whatever practices you are doing, you may sometimes have to lock yourself in a room or go for a walk and think, why am I jealous. In fact, such distancing or objectification is an essential part of the process of initiating sustainable emotional change. There are lots of techniques we can go into another time. But in no way am I saying abstain from social action.

As for the implications of this philosophy for social work, this means in the first instance that what I am doing when I am doing social work is that I start from a perspective of this philosophy, that aspect of this philosophy which I call co-presence; so that the other, the one that I am working with, is also within me. I am within her or him. This is very important because most people define their identities in a very exclusive way – so a man is a man is a man is a man, he cannot relate to a woman.

Then he has to relate to a woman; to do so, he has to understand the woman within himself. And the woman has to understand the man within herself. This is taking the philosophy of co-presence seriously and applying it in a practical way. When we hate or fear something it is useful to try to identify what it is that we fear or hate within ourselves. So we have to understand that aspect within ourselves. If we cannot find it, then we have to implicitly bring it up or evoke it.

In the same way we have to identify, go into that person, make them one with us. If there is nothing in common, then we have to stretch our conceptual, emotional thinking, our feeling, and even perhaps our physical world until we can get into that person. We become one. The basis of social work is transcendental identification in the sense of becoming one in principle with the other. That does not mean that you abolish your difference with them, it only means that you have the capacity to become them. To become as them. When you enter their world you do not believe that you can immediately teach or help them. But being part of their world, you can explore it together with them, and it becomes a joint project. Recall what I said about the teacher.

These points about action are all tautologies, that is to say they are all necessary truths. A lot of philosophers might say this. This does not mean they are easy to understand. But when you think about it, it is only you who can act. We can only act through ourselves. That does not mean that my action is limited to myself. If I wanted to affect you now, I am in fact trying to affect you, but I can only do it in virtue of my actions. I cannot do it directly, clearly, consistently or (let us use this word) ethically--rather I prefer, logically– by making someone else move. How am I supposed to move or act through another? Of course this does not mean that I cannot act with another, but I act only in and virtue of their free will, their solidarity with me, coming from their ground-state in rapport with my solidarity with them and their

being and their well being, coming from my ground-state. I am very opposed to all those other kinds of politics which model emancipation as something which can be forced, delivered or imposed from without; for, those kinds of politics, and all those other kinds of disciplines, actually tacitly embody master–slave hierarchies.

I say you are me, and I am going to try and understand you from the perspective that I can become you. Then it is up to you what you do. At the end of the day, if you choose to go your particular way, then I have to understand and accept that. One thing I should make clear. When I mean becoming one I do not mean physically, though this may play a part and you start to live like that person. When I talk about love, I do not mean that everyone should kiss everyone else. We all live in a world in which difference and singularity have their own place. I would hope that at the level of embodied personality there is very little I have in common with a hangman or a murderer, but I have to understand that human being to become him. To understand my greatest enemy I have to become that enemy. That is reconnaissance. That is something we have to do. The sensible general who is plotting or fighting a war is the one who best understands, that is becomes one, or is able to identify with, his enemy, so that he can anticipate his enemy's every move; then he will never be caught out.

So transcendental identification is a very flexible tool. Transcendental identification plus focused attention plus non-attachment. These would be the ideal spring boards for social work. Then you go into something, wholeheartedly, you do not hold anything back because you are totally focused, your energy is not dispersed and then you as a social worker understand that you can learn from that person. And even learn new techniques. That would be the perspective, and this is a very exciting area; everything in life is open, this perspective is an open one, which is up to other people and all of us to develop.

Just in case anyone gets the idea that I am critical realism, I should say that is not true. It is an international,

multi-disciplinary movement and there are lots and lots of critical realists who do not agree with everything I say, indeed agree with very little of it; and certainly critical realists do not agree with each other. So I may have been the initiator, that's all. Today I am going beyond critical realism, but what I am proposing is an idea to be developed and applied. Let us see how, as social workers and philosophers, we would put it in practice; that is a very exciting scenario, that I hope we'll all explore some more.

Chapter Four

Meta-Reality: In and Beyond Critical Realism*

Section 1: Critical Realism in the Context of the Development of the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity

The new philosophy of Meta-Reality which this book introduces in published form is a philosophy which maintains or sustains but at the same time transcends Critical Realism – precisely through realism, and indeed critical realism, about transcendence, the existence of and necessity for non-dual states and phases of being, and the critique of a disenchanted reality. We can see how it sustains but goes beyond hitherto existing critical realism, including its most recent phase – that of the transcendental dialectical critical realism which I elaborated in my book *From East to West*[1] – by examining the articulation of critical realism in two ways:

* Boston, December 2001, London, January 2002.

[1] Routledge, London & New York, 2000.

(a) Diachronically in terms of its development over time from:

transcendental realism, as a philosophy of science; through ***critical naturalism***, as a philosophy of social science; through ***the theory of explanatory critique***, as a philosophy which showed how one could rationally derive evaluative (and in particular ethical and political) positions from matters of fact; through

dialectical critical realism, as a theory of dialectic pinpointing the necessity for conceptions of absence (and negativity generally) and totality and laying the ground for a theory of freedom as the absenting of absences or the elimination [absenting] of constraints (blocks on human capacities and flourishing); through to

transcendental dialectical critical realism, as a theory of the necessary spiritual presuppositions of emancipatory (theoretical and practical) projects; and

(b) By examining its synchronic or structural articulation, that is the articulation of the different moments, stadia or levels of the system of dialectical critical realism (particularly in its transcendental form), which to an extent also resumes the diachronic, which is also a dialectical, process of the development of critical realism.

Now the emergence and trajectory of critical realism itself has to be understood in terms of the development of the philosophical discourse of modernity – which I will periodise into five phases – and of which it constitutes so many successive critiques until we reach a point, as already intimated, in which realism about transcendence allows us to transcend subject–object duality. In this way we are looking at the development of critical realism from a philosophy of science – transcendental realism – to a philosophy of universal self-realisation – transcendental dialectical critical realism – to a position in which realism about transcendence necessitates transcendence of duality, realism and even thought itself. So if, as I shall show, critical realism is to be understood in its essence as the systematic attempt to (progressively) *think being*, then this process,

carried through to its limits, ultimately transcends (or both surpasses and suspends) not only realism conceived as involving subject–object duality, but thought itself.

The five phases of the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM) which I want to discuss can only be briefly mentioned here. These five phases I will call just simply.

1. The Classical Philosophical Discourse of Modernity
2. High-Modernism
3. The Theory and Practise of Modernisation
4. Post-modernism
5. Western (Bourgeois) Triumphalism

(4) is associated with the rise of the new social movements, and (5) with the recrudescence of neo-imperialism, reactionary nationalism and chauvinism, and regressive (especially religious) fundamentalism, communalism and other fear-based movements. Indeed, each phase of this discourse, itself reflecting, as one would expect (on critical realist principles) some broader change in the social order or order of human being generally, is marked by a revolutionary upheaval. Thus,

(1) is initiated with the classical English and French bourgeois revolutions of 1640–1660 and 1789;
(2) had its heyday between the revolutions of 1848 and 1917;
(3) is associated with the revolutionary watersheds of 1945, the end of the second world war, and 1947, the symbolically and practically significant de-colonisation and partition of India;
(4) begins at the time of the revolutionary upsurge of 1968; and
(5) sets in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Bloc (1989–1991).

Each moment or phase in the development of PDM constitutes a partial critique, and at the same time a deepening of

some earlier phase, so as to constitute a dialectical totality in which we can see how the later is already implicit in the earlier phase; and how indeed the last phase (characterised by the themes of the end of history, sustained by the philosophical doctrine of what I have called ontological monovalence) is already implicitly contained in the very first phase of PDM, the classical or base discourse of modernity. This first phase of PDM (CDM) is characterised by:

(i) egocentricity; and
(ii) false abstract universality

Indeed the whole PDM is constituted by the couple of an ego, be it an individual or a group, class, gender, nation state (or some complex of these) objectively set against a manifold, described in actualistically universal terms, which is the object of that ego's action (manipulation and exploitation). This ego (itself purely illusory) is thus set against its (or at least an) other – but the categories in which the ego and its other are apprehended are both then so separated and qualitatively differentiated and opposed as to make the very universality presupposed by the discourse impossible to maintain. Thus either the ego must be part of the world, in which case the non-modern or pre-modern disappears and the whole point of the rhetoric of modernity is lost; or the ego is not part of the rest of the world (described in objectivistic, actualist mode) and so de-totalising itself from that world, cannot sustain its own universality or even upon close inspection, the coherence of its own identity, or indeed its very existence or reality. Not only does CDM necessitate a point of contrast or comparison (which it both presupposes and denies) constituted by the category of the non- or pre-modern, opposed to itself, but, in its actuality, it tacitly presupposes the existence of the other. Thus we have the figure of the intrinsic exterior or <u>past</u>,[4]

[4] This denotes the tacit inclusion of the excluded. Thus we have the first hint of what I have called the TINA form. See *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, Verso, London and New York 1993, Chapter 2.7 passim.

implicitly secreted into the discourse, below the level of consciousness, as the necessary condition of that discourse, reflecting the exploitation of the excluded in reality, whether the excluded be other individuals, non-bourgeois classes, women, colonised peoples, etc.

It is the false and abstract, and self-refuting character of the partial totality that CDM sustains which is the thrust of the critique of high-modernism (HM), which philosophically and politically reached its zenith or apogee in Marxism, which also highlighted CDM's lack of reflexivity. It is here that the concept of ideology emerges, with the crucial emphases of the critique of HM being (iii) *the incomplete totality* (and dualism) and (iv) *lack of reflexivity* of CDM. But HM is itself vulnerable to the very critique it essays against CDM, for the intellectuals, artists and others who expressed this standpoint were very far from constituting Gramscian 'organic intellectuals', that is they neither articulated nor represented the views of the masses for whom they spoke. Indeed 'substitutionism' or 'speaking for' a group of people became a characteristic feature of this phase, and indeed all subsequent phases too. With this substitutionism went of course 'elitism'. And it is this feature that rises to the fore in the third phase of the discourse.

The theorists and practitioners of modernisation were concerned to bring up (or down) to their level of (implicitly) themselves the rest, that is the non- or pre-modern part of humanity. Thus in the theories of Rostow or the practices of modernising social engineering, welfare state or colonial regime, there was implicit an assumption of (v) *unilinearity* and (v*) *judgementalism*; that is, not only was the modern, whatever form this happened to take at any particular place and time, superior to everything inconsistent with it, but there was also only one route to get from it to the modern condition. This judgementalism went hand-in-hand with an accentuation of the theme of (5**) *disenchantment*, that is the denial of any meaning or value in being—a theme which had already begun to be articulated in the course of (2), that is at the time of high-modernism, in the context of such motifs as the Nietzschian

'death of God' and Weberian 'rationalisation' and which was later, in the time of that development of the discourse of high-modernism which took the near post-modernist form of post-structuralism, the 'end of man' (Foucault), 'history' (Lyotard) and (through its heat death) 'meaning' (Derrida).

Little did it bother the ideologues of modernisation that the 'modern' could only be sustained in dialectical intra-action[3] and exploitation of that to which it was being opposed. For example if everyone became a capitalist then there would be no-one left for capitalists to exploit and so no more capitalism.[4] This is not just a question of definition, of one term only making sense in relation to another; much more basically, it is a question of the actual constitution of the presumed superior or privileged term, which of necessity presupposed in practice and derived its own superiority from the existence and exploitation of the inferior or suppressed term.

[3] This is an internal and dialectical category in contrast to the normal connotations of 'inter-action'.

[4] Unless, of course, one was to suppose that every capitalist was also a worker; in which case the sum totality of capitalist aspects of human beings could exploit the sum totality of their worker aspects. And this of course is probably the correct way to look at the concept of a 'capitalist', namely not as specifying a human being, but as specifying human beings, or some of them, in an aspect or role of their being. See, for instance, Marx's admission that he by no means paints the capitalist or worker 'coleur de rose'. This itself implies that it is wrong (*a*) to find an actualist basis for entities such as the working class; and (*b*) that the minimum necessary unit for human emancipation is the whole of humanity (all of whom are enmeshed in master–slave relations of various kinds. What traditional Marxism has characteristically committed here is a version of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, that is identifying a real tendency or aspect in being with a particular manifestation in actuality. These roles must be understood in principle at all four places of social being. Thus we internalise our master–slave and colonial relationships not only within the structures of the slave or colonial society, but within the subjectivity of the enslaved or the colonised. And within the slave there is also the psychic master who would seek to enslave others, just as he perpetuates and even reinforces the enslavery of his good, "higher" or "ground-state" self, that is his free, loving, creative nature.

It was in this phase (3) that the universalising tendencies of PDM became most evident; and it was onto this that (4) post-modernism fastened its critique, namely as a reaction against the abstract actualist obliteration of identities and differences, including differential geo-historical trajectories. This coincided with the emergence of the new social movements, partly as a cultural reaction to the social practices and forms expressed and articulated in the abstract analytical universality of PDM, whether as CDM or in its subsequent phases. Unfortunately, in the very accentuation in this phase of a new politics of identity and difference the interconnectedness and unity of humanity and indeed living forms was lost. What was missing here was any conception of a dialectical totality, with the crucial concepts of dialectical universality and concrete singularity absent.[5]

Thus this phase also brought out the (vi) *formalist* and *functionalist* (vi*) nature of the whole PDM. Thus we had characteristically the assumptions of either the plasticity of nature, or more generally the non-ego, treated as an object of instrumental (means–ends, conditional) modes of reasoning, thought and behaviour; together with a more or less crude (in theory reductionist, and in practice mechanical) (vii) *materialism*, philosophically denying or underestimating the role of ideas, consciousness and hence intentionality in geo-history; and substantively, in an egocentric world, pivoted on a sense of the absolute or categorial separateness of the ego, self or unit of identification, from the rest of the world, underwriting various relations of attachment (or aversion), of desire or fear and manipulative treatment, and corresponding instrumental or manipulative treatment of the world of objects with which man (or the nation state) sought to fill his own inner-emptiness, setting up a master-slave relationship between the ego or the modern and the non-ego, other or non- or pre-modern.

Post-modernism was not only characterised by an incapacity to sustain a coherent totality, but ultimately, just in virtue

[5] *Dialectic. The Pulse of Freedom*. London & New York 1993, Chapter 2.7 and Chapter 3.8.

of this, an incapacity to sustain any notion of itself. For it duplicated the relationship between modern and non-modern in the relationship between post-modern and modern; and in its overt acceptance of the claims of PDM in its development, and especially in its denial of:

> (a) ontology, tacitly presupposed—in the 'ontic fallacy' of PDM (most apparently in its classical [CDM] phase)—and of
> (b) the capacity for a rational assessment of philosophical and other positions, it undermined its own capacity to sustain itself, for the post-modernist discourse must be real, if it is to have any effect at all; and its own rationality, for there must be some ground for the post-modernist discourse.

Thus was paved the way, after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, for the emphatic reassertion of the theme of the (viii) *ontological monovalence* already implicit in CDM. This is the moment of Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*.[5] This indeed was merely re-claiming what Nietzsche and Hegel had already claimed in the previous century. Each alike highlighted the taboo on negativity or absence (and hence process and change) in being, encapsulated within western philosophy from the time of Parmenides on.[7] Of course the very statement of the end of history is itself a profoundly historical

[5] London, 1992.

[7] But actually the ancient Greeks were no stranger to the disparaging contrast between themselves and other, less civilised, cultures. More generally the contrast between 'us' and 'them' lies at the heart of inter-tribal conflict, not just the assumptions of imperial civilisations. But nothing however had quite the ruthlessness and sharpness of the dichotomies and dualisms that came into play at the time of the PDM, since the real force underpinning these was nothing else than the remorseless logic of the nascent capitalist mode of production and exploitation of nature and human beings alike, a dynamic and self-expanding form of exploitation without precedent in human history, in which an unconstrained and unconscious conatus or drive to accumulation is hurtling humanity (and with it the planet) into crisis at all four planes of social being.

(and hence self-refuting) statement; but the way was now set for a western triumphalism, which generated in its wake the regressive fear-based, often religiously-inspired, forms of fundamentalism and communalism which co-exist uneasily in defensive alignment with post-modernist social forms today, as so many symptoms of the alienation and fragmentation of being in an increasingly interconnected world. However this logic of the 'end' has itself a clearly identifiable end. For when everything is commodified, that is reified and turned into a thing, then the process of commodification must come to a halt; and since there will be nothing more to commodify, there can be no further basis for commodification, that is, the expansion, and thus the very survival, of the regime of commodification, reification and alienation. The only question is whether this regime comes to a halt before the process of commodification is absolute—for when it does, or if it did, there would be no more nature and nothing more to count as a human being.

This then is the general cultural-philosophical background to the genesis and development of critical realism. When I started working on the system which became known as transcendental realism in the late 1960s, it was out of an interest in applying philosophy to the problematic of (3), that is of modernisation, in the context of exploring the relevance of economic theory to underdeveloped countries, an attempt to investigate the feasibility of the journey from the modern to the non- or pre-modern, from the west to the east.

The latest phase of critical realism began to develop at the time of (5), just as the first phase of critical realism began to develop at the time of (4) (1968). For, with the collapse of actually existing socialism and the transparent weakness or absence of radical alternatives in the 'modern', 'northern' or 'western' world to the dominant political, social and economic forms, and in particular the absence of any viable socialist or radical alternative to actually existing capitalism in its high monetarist mode, it became necessary to go into the deeper human, natural and spiritual presuppositions of the traditional emancipatory projects of the radical left in the west. To my

surprise, embedded within these projects were deeply spiritual assumptions about human nature and possibilities which had nowhere informed actually existing socialist practice (any more than liberal presuppositions or ideals informed actually existing capitalist practice). The vision, so nicely articulated by Marx, of a communist society as one in which 'the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all' logically entails that your development and flourishing is as important to me as my own—a presupposition so strong that it itself must be universally instantiated in such a society for it to hold at all. This is exactly the same as the ideal of the Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism, in which the 'no ego' of the realised being engages in the *dharmakaya* of the whole of humanity, that is, cannot himself be free until each and every being in the cosmos is fully free, in the sense of 'realised'. In only slightly more muted forms, such themes can be found within every political and religious tradition and every culture, and indeed are implicit, at some rudimentary level, in every aspect or form of human life. This will be explained shortly; here the symmetrical point to note is that if the odyssey of critical realism began with the starkly dualistic counterposition of transitive and intransitive dimensions, or of knowledge and being (in order to reaffirm the necessity for a conception of being, i.e. to revindicate ontology) as part of a project moving 'From West to East', then the latest phase, and its own transcendence in the philosophy of Meta-Reality articulated in this book, invoking aspects of eastern spiritual thought and moving 'From East to West', involves the breakdown of all forms of duality and dualism even as a necessary condition of sustaining a coherent account of a world in which duality dominates and occludes the non-duality on which it nevertheless depends.[a]

[a] Although the philosophy articulated in this book is consistent with, sustains, and arose as a result of an internal dialectic within the developing trajectory of critical realism, it transcends and goes beyond critical realism and therefore I give it a new name 'the philosophy of Meta Reality'. There is something slightly problematic about giving the philosophy articulated in this book any name at all, because a name almost inevitably fixates and

Section 2: A Brief Review of the Diachronic Development and Synchronic Structural Articulation of Transcendental Dialectical Critical Realism

(a) Diachronic Development

There are three important features to note about the process of the development of critical realism, which I have been locating in the previous section in the context of a critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity:

1. Its immanently critical character
2. Its constituting a dialectical process
3. Its constituting a progressive movement from questions to do with science and objectivity through to normative and subjective questions of freedom and ultimately universal self-realisation, a development powered by the single norm of truth.

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sticks mental energy; however, it is impossible or virtually impossible in working in a dualistic world against dualism and duality not to use the instruments of dualism against itself. Moreover, people need to be able to talk about, which is a necessarily dualistic mode of acting, this new philosophical position and hence need a way of referring to it, that is a name or a description—hence the title 'the philosophy of Meta-Reality'. The 'Meta' here connotes both the idea of transcendence, that is the idea of going to a level beyond or behind or between reality, while at the same time the 'Reality' in the title makes it clear that this level is itself still real, and so part of the very same totality that critical realism has been describing all along. It is just that for those very structures and aspects of reality that critical realism has tried to describe and explain that we need to invoke levels of being and agency in which there is no longer any duality or subject–object opposition or even distinction; and that these phases and moments of being are necessary for every aspect of the dualistic world in which we live and the categories of which sustain our normal thought and discourse.

The first thing to appreciate is that every philosophical argument must of necessity take an immanently critical form; that is to say one only has an argument worth the name if one is engaging with the premises, presuppositions or positions of some actually existing (and more or less causally efficacious) foe. The argument is always against a real opponent, never a straw man. By the same token this means that reflexivity, or the capacity of a theory or discourse to coherently situate and sustain itself, is a very important, indeed the supreme, criterion of philosophy. Thus a book such as Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*[4] which argues, in Part One, that the world consists only of atoms and the void (that is, argues for an eliminative materialism), and at the same time goes on, in Part Three, to give an account of the role of philosophy as consisting in 'conversational hermeneutics' can straight away be rejected. For how can one sustain the intelligibility, rationality or even possibility of conversational hermeneutics if the world is not a stratified system of emergent levels with their own sui generis properties and powers, but consists merely in atoms and the void'? Or, to take another example, when Hume asserts that there is no better reason for going out of a building by the ground-floor door rather than by the second floor window, and yet at the same time he himself always leaves by the ground-floor, then we know immediately that there is something wrong with Hume's account; that is, his own practice belies and betrays his theory. Thus there is also a sense in which we, in philosophy, let a theoretical position undermine itself; we do not impose an external or arbitrary position or premise, but just show that and how theorists' claims about reality cannot be sustained in the totality of his own practice. Thus the unity of theory and practice assumes great import in philosophical critique.

Moving now to the second point, that is the nature of the development of critical realism as itself a dialectical process, we must note that this itself has two aspects. The first is that, pursuing the practice of immanent critique, what critical realism

[4] Oxford, 1980.

does or has done in each phase of its development is to locate a glaring inconsistency, contradiction or anomaly in the theoretical position it orientates itself against, showing how this contradiction or inconsistency itself stems from an incompleteness or constitutive absence in the pre-existing philosophical problem field that currently dominates the field in question. The critical/therapeutic work of critical realism is just to repair this absence, which, by re-totalising the existing theoretical scene will inevitably involve some re-description of what was already present therein.

Thus the great absence that transcendental realism seized on was the absence of the possibility of an account of ontology; that is, the supposition that, in Wittgenstein's words, it was sufficient to treat only of the network, not what the network described; that in fact one could not refer to being as such, but only to our descriptions of being, a position, which I called the 'epistemic fallacy'.[10] This is not only false; it masks the tacit secretion of an implicit ontology, for how could one say anything about beliefs about the world without those beliefs themselves presupposing something about the world that they describe? It is also patently self-refuting. For we must ask: what is the ontological status of the embargo on ontology? Either it is real, that is the declaration that ontology is impossible is itself real, and exists, which opens the floodgates to the whole of reality; or if that statement is not real, does not exist, has not occurred, then what possible grounds are or could there be for even acknowledging it, i.e. how can one have an argument with something that does not exist?

This feature of isolating and remedying absences also gives to critical realism in its development the property that it successively breaks taboos. Thus, as transcendental realism, it breaks the taboo on ontology, about speaking about reality; as critical naturalism it breaks the taboo about speaking of transcending the oppositions and dualisms that characterise the contemporary social sciences, reflecting contradictions and dualities in our substantive social life; as explanatory critique,

[10] See *A Realist Theory of Science*, Leeds 1975 [London, 1997], p. 37.

it breaks the taboo on the rational valuation or assessment of value positions, based on the stipulation that value judgements are subjective preferences or matters of taste that one has which are not susceptible to rational or factual scrutiny.[1] Dialectical critical realism breaks the taboo on admitting absence and negativity in reality; while transcendental dialectical critical realism breaks the taboo on a rational discourse about spirituality and cognate matters.

To summarise, transcendental realism breaks the taboo on a rational discourse about *being*; critical naturalism on a rational discourse (and therefore possibility of sublation) of duality, *contradiction* and split; the theory of explanatory critique breaks the taboo of a rational discourse about *values*; dialectical critical realism of a rational discourse about negativity, dialectic, process and *change*; and finally, transcendental dialectical critical realism of a rational discourse about *transcendence* and the transcendent.

The second aspect of the development of critical realism as a dialectical process is that it not only isolates absences (incompleteness') generating contradictions in the existing conventional discourse of philosophy; it remedies incompleteness' in its own discourse itself, that is in its previous phases: thus critical realism is a process of development in thought which

[1] Thus when Hume says 'its not more rational to prefer the destruction of the whole world to my little finger', he is saying there are no grounds for preferring one to the other – a doctrine which has been enshrined in what came to be known as 'Hume's Law', and is still the bedrock of ethical and political theory today. An examination of Hume's claim however shows it to contain an obvious absurdity. For surely it is more rational for Hume to prefer the destruction of his little finger to that of the whole world – because if the whole world goes, then his little finger will go with it too; so he loses his little finger whatever happens. If he chooses to sacrifice his little finger, then he saves not only his other nine fingers but the rest of himself and the rest of the whole world too. Clearly what Hume has done here is tacitly to extrude himself from the rest of the totality, de-totalising himself. Thus the comparison is between the individual philosopher (or it may be philosophical discourse as a whole) or the academy, or intellectuals, or a particular class or nation state, or whatever, and the remainder, the rest of being.

builds ever more complete and rounded totalities, continually self-critical in a process of self-transcendence without any conceivable or a priori positable end.[12] This duplex dialectical process means that critical realism always consists in a double immanent critique—of the external manifold of received theory, and of its own dialectical past.

The third feature of critical realism mentioned above, namely its progressive movement from a concern with the most objective features of social practice to the supposedly most subjective ones, leads on to another, namely, the way it transcends the oppositions between objectivity and subjectivity and such similar oppositions defining the existing way of thinking. Thus, on the new position of the philosophy of Meta-Reality, developed in and through critical realism to a position which, while at the same time encompassing it also goes beyond it, shows the scientist to be nothing other than a (practical) mystic; and shows the mystic to be of necessity engaged in the most this worldly concerns. So in this way we see another feature that characterises the development of critical realism: that is the way in which once we have transcended an existing problem field, stuck on and constituted by a paradox, duplicity or contradiction, the paradox dissolves, and the opposed terms, previously positive contraries, seen in the new light of the greater totality, as negative sub-contraries, allow us to redefine the level of reality concerned. So the

[12] Nor should we think that any one phase in the development of critical realism or its application to any one problem area is itself limited or fixed—even if transcendental realism describes in broad outlines what we need to know about science, transcendental realist philosophy of science opens up a new research programme which can and has been pursued in all the different natural and social sciences; and the arts and practices, from architecture to education, of life. Nor should we assume that there is a single correct interpretation of any particular move or position within any phase of critical realism or its totality. Thus books as different as Andrew Collier's *Critical Realism. An Introduction To Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*, London, 1994, and William Outhwaite's *New Philosophies of Social Science*, London, 1987, adopt radically different, but equally authentic, ways of interpreting, and implicitly developing, the theses of critical realism.

traditional oppositions and dualities of received (conventional, contemporary) thought must be discarded, re-thought and overturned in the light of the deeper position or vantage point from which we are now perceiving and articulating reality.

(b) Synchronic Articulation

I now want to look at critical realism as a totality in terms of its structural articulation as dialectical critical realism (DCR), and in particular, its further transcendental or spiritual development or inflexion as transcendental dialectical critical realism. The phases and moments of the structure of (transcendental) dialectical critical realism [(T)DCR] can be seen to mirror the phases of the diachronic dialectical development of CR from TR (transcendental realism) through CN (critical naturalism), EC (the theory of explanatory critique) to DCR and TDCR; or, to put it another way, the moments of the dialectical articulation of the system of (T)DCR mirror, by deepening the original impulse, its diachronic development.

> The moments of DCR are, as is pretty well known:
> 1M of ontology;
> 2E of negativity (dialectic process and change);
> 3L of totality (holistic causality, internal relationality, etc.);
> 4D of transformative praxis and of reflexivity (the unity of theory and practice).

This system has been called the MELD system of DCR.

The spiritual or radical transcendentalisation of DCR as TDCR develops a fifth aspect which can in fact be presented and developed within the existing structures of MELD. Thus we have MELDA (the 'A' for 'Aspect') within MELD, as a further transcendental and dialectical development or deepening of DCR. MELD of course just abbreviates the names that I gave to differentiate the different moments of DCR thus I called the first moment or level a 'Moment'; the second an 'Edge'; the third a 'Level', and the fourth a 'Dimension';

the fifth I now refer to as an 'Aspect'. There is no special significance at all in all these differential labels that I gave to the moments of the systems of (T)DCR – these were merely mnemonic devices to help the reader/listener to differentiate the different levels of the system being discussed. I will come back to this in a moment.

What is immediately very clear is that the whole of critical realism can be understood in terms of a systematic attempt to think *being* in a systematically progressive way. Thus at 1M we just think being as such and in general; at 2E we think being as in process, processually; at 3L we think being as a totality; and at 4D we think being as incorporating transformative practice and reflexivity (4D/5A). Then at 5A we think being, involving transformative praxis and reflexivity, that is self-conscious human activity, as incorporating a spiritual or transcendental moment. Thus we think being (1M), think being processually (2E), think being processually and as totality (3L), think being processually and as a totality incorporating human transformative agency and reflexivity (4D), and think being processually, as a totality incorporating human agency and reflexivity, depending on the necessary spiritual or transcendental moment of being, consciousness and agency (5A). At each level or moment at the systematic articulation of (T)DCR we have a deepening of our reflection on being.

Just considering this in terms of the fifth aspect developed in TDCR we can understand the special inflexion given to the different moments or stadia of DCR as follows:

1M – the idea of alethic truth, including conceptions of an essential ultimate ingredient of the cosmos as a whole (thematised in conventional theology as God);
2E – transcendence, focusing particularly on the moment of transcendence within the transcending move to a greater totality in any dialectical process;
3L – the idea of love as an essential binding, healing and totalising force in the humanised world, and indeed possibly in nature generally;
4D – the ideas of spontaneous right-action and cosmic consciousness or enlightenment as the realisation of

> the goal of 'absolute reason', that is the unity of theory and practice, the norm of reflexivity, which we have seen drives the dialectic of philosophical inquiry.

Combining the dialectical and transcendental dialectical emphases we can provide a further mnemonic for MELDA. Thus we can think of a theme of 1M of ontology as involving the idea that there is **more** to being than our current knowledge of it; the theme of 2E as involving the **edginess**, that is the points of friction, tension and contradiction within the social and natural world which, as symptomatic of incompleteness, that is, constitutive absences of some sort, induces or stimulates the dialectics of particular aspects of being; the theme of 3L as involving **love** as a totalising force par excellence (at least human) being; the theme of 4D as involving the practical or axiological imperative **do**; and the theme par excellence of the further spiritual or transcendental phase as involving the ineffable but expressive '**Aaah!**', the exclamation say of 'ah' in 'eureka'—I have it!—at the moment of a scientific breakthrough or of an artistic or practical accomplishment.

This 'Aaah' also resonates with the 'â' of the Vedic primordial sounds (cf 'aum'), but it can also and equally be represented by the 'oh!' of zen poetry and practice, the 'wow', 'hey' and 'gee' of contemporary Atlantic discourse. The fact is of course that at this point, the point of transcendence, duality has broken down, so that any attempt to describe it, necessarily involving stepping out of a non-dualistic mode of consciousness, will both fail in some way to do justice to it and appear to be somewhat arbitrary or idiosyncratic, or even considered at a discursive level, meaningless. Thus although uttering a meditative mantra or a heartfelt prayer may be far more elevating, any sustained consciousness on any object or topic will eventually take you to the same state of kenosis or self-emptying or inner-emptiness which is the hallmark of the transcendental experience.

More Edgy Love Do and **Aaah!** may be useful ways of remembering the progressive deepening of our understanding of being within the structures of TDCR. Of course this

process does not end with TDCR. Thus in the philosophy of Meta-Reality articulated in this book we further expand our ontology, that is our understanding of being, by seeing the whole realm of duality as formed within and dependent upon non-duality; and in attempting in this phase of thought to *think non-duality* we thereby *re-enchant reality*. For non-duality involves the breakdown of subject–object duality; and with the collapse of subject–object duality (the originally defining hallmark of both TR and 1M), the semiotic triangle collapses. For since there is now no distinction between the signifier and the referent, there is no distinction between the signified and referent either—thus we have the immediate identity of meaning and being, paralleling the immediate identity of subject and object; so that being, reality becomes significant, that is replete with *meaning*. But not only with meaning, also of *value*. This has already been presaged, at the level of EC, in the critique of Hume's Law, which transcends the duality between fact and value, by seeing values as factually grounded. However we now see the facts, that is being itself, as immediately evaluative, so that it is not just that actions may be more or less right, but that states of affairs, that is being as such, quite independently of any action we take in relation to them are themselves intrinsically right or wrong. Thus a state of suffering or homelessness or cruelty is wrong; a feeling of peace or contentment, energisation is right, etc. This re-enchantment of reality defines the further deepening of ontology made possible by the deeper thematisation of transcendence and non-duality which we are exploring in this chapter and this book generally. This then is the re-enchanted reality of the philosophy of Meta-Reality. Of course it is not that the philosophy of Meta-Reality enchants reality. Reality is already always enchanted. It is just that we do not, in the era, age or epoch of disenchantment, recognise it. This lack of recognition of enchantment is itself a real feature of and in that reality which occludes and masks that on which it depends. So the ideology of disenchantment, even though it is false, is indeed a real and causally efficacious feature in being, with real determinate effects. Similarly re-enchantment can help to

roll back disenchantment and enables the space of the re-enchanted world, that is the world which was always enchanted, to develop and grow, the effects of disenchantment to be reversed or undone, and indeed enchantment to take on the aspect of a new form.[3]

It is not difficult to see that the different phases of the dialectical development of critical realism map exactly on to the stadia of its synchronic articulation. Thus corresponding to transcendental realism, which thematises ontology and critiques the epistemic fallacy, that is the reduction of being to knowledge, we have 1M of ontology. Similarly, corresponding to critical naturalism which enables us to see, and see through, the splits and dichotomies of social thought, reflecting real contradictions in the social world, we have 2E of negativity, dialectic and change. Corresponding to the theory of explanatory critique we re-totalise being in such a way that values become a part of it, not extruded from it; and of course values are precisely the affective part of the (at least conscious) sentient, animate world. Thus corresponding to EC we have 3L of totality. Similarly, corresponding to DCR, or the theory of dialectic itself, we have a view of reality as oriented towards the absenting of constitutive absences which generate contradictions and necessitate their removal and that of other constraints in the dynamic manifest in particular dialectics, such as the dialectic which I described as the dialectic of desire to freedom, and which I described generically as the 'pulse of freedom', but which is nevertheless present in every aspect of being as such. The spread between TR and TDCR is the spread between an ontology of science and axiology or practice of universal self-realisation.

Let us now map the correspondences of (1) the dialectical development of CR from TR to TDCR, (2) the synchronic

[3] This then indicates once more the classic figure of the TINA formation — with disenchantment, a false theory of being, occluding and dominating that on which it depends. Re-enchantment in critiquing this false theory enables the mask of disenchantment to be partially lifted; and re-enchantment to flow into the liberated space.

articulation of MELD, (3) the inflection which 5A gives as MELDA to MELD, and (4) the critique of the PDM.

TR corresponds, we have seen, to 1M ontology which develops its theme in the manner indicated in dialectical and transcendental dialectical critical realism, and as illustrated here in Section 3 below in the spiritual exposition of being in the philosophy of Meta-Reality.

CN corresponds to 2E of negativity, dialectic process and change, insofar as critical naturalism involved the sublation and therefore the situation of the critique of duality in social theory as reflecting duality and contradiction in social life and practice, and therefore understood contradiction as real and negativity as an inherent feature of all, at least social, life. DCR generalises this insight by recognising that absence is essential not only to all change,[*] but a constitutive feature of all being. Nothing purely positive is possible. TDCR recognises the importance of transcendence in processes of change, a position deepened and radicalised in the philosophy of Meta-Reality where we shall see that it is essential to, indeed the foundation of all, social life and being generally. We shall see how **creativity** is the fundamental form, corresponding to 2E of absence, negativity and change in which the ground-state (in which the **potential being** of what Bohm called the implicate order is enfolded, corresponding to 1M of ontology, here the implicit ontology of the ground-state) manifests itself in human consciousness; **love** is the fundamental form corresponding to 3I. of totality in which the ground-state manifests itself in social life corresponding to 3L of totality; while **right-action** is the necessary form in which the ground-state manifests the 4D feature of transformative praxis, and **fulfilled intentionality** corresponds to the fifth aspect of reflexivity. Moving to the microcosm of human action we have

[*] Definitionally, change involves necessarily the absenting of something there or present (even if it was only an absence), but it also essentially always involves the emergence (which is the positive bi-polar or outcome of absence of something new).

1M—*ontology* corresponds to the moment of *will*
2F—*negativity* corresponds to the moment of *thought*
3L—*totality* corresponds to the moment of emotion or *feeling*
4D—*transformative praxis* or physically manifest action on the world corresponds to the moment of physical objectification, or *making*
5A—*reflexivity* corresponds to the moment of *fulfilled* or realised (successful) *intentionality*

The theory of explanatory critique (EC) corresponds to 3L of totality, insofar as values and emotivational factors are included within being. This avoids the greatest split within contemporary philosophy, the split involved in Kantian and post-Kantian dualism, a split originated by Hume's Law, and signalled by the taboo on deriving evaluative positions from factual ones; manifest in Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy by the contrast between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, the world of science and fact and the world of value and action; or the world of science and the world of religion or faith. But EC not only heals the most gaping rupture or wound within the philosophical totality, correctly understood it brings out the very principle of healing or totalising itself this is the principle, the binding power of love; whether love is interpreted cosmologically, as ancient Greeks such as Empedocles or Heraclitus were wont to do (and as some contemporary cosmologists do by identifying love with the strong attractive force in the four fundamental forces of the universe), or whether love is just seen as the prime totalising force in social life. Of course insofar as all life, and indeed being, is implicitly conscious, love must implicitly apply to all life, and indeed being, at least in an enfolded, implicate or proleptic way. For love is precisely the force which binds, heals, shapes, forms and sustains any totality—be it a cosmos or an individual organism, even in the form of that self-love which is necessary for any organism to sustain its own life.

Dialectic and DCR itself corresponds to 4D of transformative praxis and the unity or theory in practice manifest in reflexivity.

The fundamental form that praxis takes is always that of absenting some lack, some incompleteness, some constraint in the life of some human being or totality; and it does this most coherently, self-consistently and rationally when it acts from the standpoint of the greatest possible totality. Insofar as it can act from the depth and totality of the ground-state then the unity of theory in practice will be immediately manifest in spontaneous right-action. But right-action is a necessary feature for any action at all. For you could not do anything, even make any mistake or error in your doing, unless it constituted in some way a making, that is a doing which involves the production of a result, a doing which is, to that extent and in that respect, done correctly. If you put the wrong key in the door you still have had to put the wrong key in the door correctly. So just as every human action involves creativity, that is the production of something new (even if this creativity is manifest only in the form of the production of a repetition, that is a result already achieved, that repetition is itself a creative act), and just as every human relationship is sustained at some level, in some form by that form of identification with or feeling for the other, i.e. becoming one to a small degree with the other, which manifests love; so no action is possible without an element of right-action.

The manner in which TDCR developed its take on 4D of transformative praxis and reflexivity led to the themes of spontaneous right-action and the generalisation of the unity of theory in practice or reflexivity as cosmic consciousness or enlightenment.

The articulation and inflection of MELDA within MELD may therefore be summarised as follows.

> 1M—**of ontology**—finds its inflection at 5A in the concept of **alethic truth** and the other concepts derivative from it, such as those of TINA formation, ultimata (within TDCR understood as God; within the philosophy of Meta-Reality as the ground-state and cosmic envelope; and then as the ground of that ground-state and that envelope).

2E—of **negativity**—finds is inflection at 5A in the concept of **transcendence**, which is the fulcrum of all dialectical and transformative processes.

3L—of **totality**—finds its 5A inflection in the concept of **love**, the binding, healing or totalising force in social life.

4D—of **transformative praxis**—finds its 5A inflection in the concept of **spontaneous right-action**; and

reflexivity or the unity of theory in practice finds its 5A inflection in the concept of **self-realisation** and ultimately universal self-realisation.

Finally we can relate these moments of development of critical realism to the PDM. Thus the critiques of **(i)** and **(ii)** egocentricity and false abstract universality, the fundamental themes of CDM, were precisely the atomistic and actualistic world view critiqued by TR in its critique of empiricist ontology. The incomplete totality and lack of reflexivity **(iii)** and **(iv)** were precisely the features that CN fastened on, and correspond exactly to the critique of high-modernism, including the meta-critique of its Marxist form. The critique of **(v)** unilinearity, together with **(v*)** judgementalism and **(v**)** disenchantment, the fundamental features of the ideology of modernisation precisely corresponds to the levels of 3L of totality and the theory of explanatory critique. The critique of **(vi)** formalism and functionalism and **(vii)** materialism,[15] features which post-modernism and the new social movements fastened on, precisely correspond to the level of 4D of transformative praxis and the theory of dialectic and DCR. Finally, the critique of **(viii)** ontological monovalence, the characteristic theme of triumphalism and its regressive reactions, such as religious fundamentalism, seizes on precisely that aspect of

[15] Marxism never came to terms with the role of consciousness, ideas and intentionality, the defining characteristics of human agency, as foundational features of social life. The result was that its own self-understanding and its own practice was acutely limited by a failure to come to terms with the subjective and self-transformative prerequisites for social change.

the infinite or absolute which we have been calling the ground-state and the cosmic envelope.[16]

Now moving on to the scope of the rest of this chapter, we shall see that these different moments of the philosophy of critical realism each reflect some aspect of the philosophy of Meta-Reality, which nevertheless, in transcending hitherto existing critical realism, re-totalises it in such a way as to merit a new name. Thus this chapter explores the way in which the philosophy of Meta-Reality deepens ontology, that is the way in which it expands our comprehension of being. This corresponds to 1M of ontology (and also of course the original founding moment of TR). In the sequel to this book, *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality*, we shall be looking at creativity, which corresponds to the 2E domain of becoming, presupposing absence and change.[17] The positive bi-polar or dual of absence is emergence and the central concept we will be focusing on here is precisely that of creativity. We will also be looking at love which is the central or pivotal concept in the domain of 3L. And of course at action, paradigmatically physical action (or action which has a physical manifestation or component) which corresponds to the domain of 4D. Such action either fulfils (and reflects) or does not fulfil (and therefore does not reflect) the intentionality of the agent, the volitional,

[16] Of course the absolute in this sense is always manifest in some relative, particular and concretely singularised form. Moreover the absolute itself is infinite in scope and potentially subject to change; that is, must be understood as encapsulating and embodying all the aspects of our understanding of ontology, which in this conception of the philosophy of Meta-Reality are retained, albeit in a radically redescribed form, while being transcended.

[17] Change is always the presenting of something new and/or the absenting of something old. And it centrally and necessarily implicates absence. But a moment's reflection also shows that absence is a necessary condition for any determinate being at all. For how could one mark out, identify anything positive without space, punctuation, hiatus, gap, silence, pause, in-betweenness, etc? A purely positive reality would be completely featureless – there would be no way of differentiating a Parmenidean block and a Heraclitean instant.

creative, e-motivated agent in action. These five moments corresponding microcosmically, as will, thought, emotion, physical action and objectification, result or consequence in being of the physical action, correspond to the five moments of any process of action. So we are able to begin to see how the philosophical space that I am articulating here further maps on to but deepens the existing conceptual space of TDCR. Of course any conception of agency presupposes a self, that is an agent; and so we are naturally led on to consider the nature or being of the self who acts in the world; and to consider it in respect of its differential powers, opportunities, etc. which takes us into the traditional domain of the topics of freedom and emancipation. In fact in the philosophy of Meta-Reality we consider emancipation as involving three aspects:

Freedom, involving at the very least the elimination of heteronomous determinations, and hence the elimination of negative incompleteness.

Fulfilment, involving the growth of positive capacities and powers, that is the elimination, to at least some degree, of positive incompleteness.

Peace, which is (dialectically) universal fulfilment.

This then is the skeletal programme of the development of the philosophy of Meta-Reality. In the rest of this chapter we will just concentrate on the progressive deepening of ontology, corresponding to the field of IM. But since everything in the world is included within ontology we should not be surprised at the scope and scale of the results we will be able to achieve here.

Section 3: The Theory of the Ground-State, the Cosmic Envelope, Transcendence and Co-presence

In this section we shall see how the characteristic themes of the philosophy of Meta-Reality can be generated by reflection on, and further elaboration of, the principles already articulated within critical realism, in the systematic form of

1M—ontology; and how these principles, which can be summarised as the theory of the ground-state, the cosmic envelope and transcendental identification in consciousness themselves make possible what I shall call 'syntheses of self-realisation'. So I will begin by resuming the characteristic themes of 1M—ontology; and I will do so by articulating the new philosophy of Meta-Reality through a set of numbered principles, the earlier ones which will be familiar to those who followed the development of existing critical realism, but each one will be given a new inflection as I develop what I will call the *spiritual exposition of being*. What I am going to do in this section is build up the generalised theory of the ground-state, the cosmic envelope and transcendental identification in consciousness from the successive deepening of the principles of ontology as established in critical realism.

It will be remembered that the characteristic theme of transcendental realism is that of—and this will be the first principle—

(1) The Principle of the Inexorability of Ontology

This principle specifies not only the legitimacy, but the inexorability of ontology, that is not only of its legitimacy but of its necessity, and indeed inevitability, in any epistemological account, more generally any account not only of knowledge, but of any human action or property of human beings. This can be summarised under the rubric of the critique of the epistemic fallacy. But not only in transcendental realism, and critical realism generally, do we have a revindication of ontology; we show the necessity for an ontology of a radically different type to that presupposed in hitherto existing philosophy—or at least philosophy of the kind current in the situation in which critical realism was forged.

Thus in opposition to the flat, undifferentiated and unchanging ontology encapsulated in the Humean theory of causal laws, critical realism shows the necessity for a conception of being as stratified, differentiated and changing. The transcendental refutation of the lynchpin of contemporary philosophies,

not only of positivistic but of non-positivistic (e.g. neo-Kantian) current accounts of science, and of non-scientistic (e.g. Habermassian, post-modernist) as well as scientistic philosophies tacitly presupposed by the very theories which were oriented against positivism and scientism too, was that of the Humean theory of causal laws. It was supposed that scientists discovered in their experience, more particularly by experimental activity, that the world consisted of constant conjunctions of atomistic events, that is, that the world was adequately described in terms of empirical regularities. Employing the method of immanent critique we must start by analysing the activity which empiricism fastens on, namely experimental activity. If experimental activity is necessary to generate epistemically significant results, then those results, which science knows as causal laws, would not have occurred without it. In an experiment a scientist generates the sequence of events, altering the course of nature from what it otherwise would have been; so the course of nature cannot be described in terms of empirical regularities or in terms of anything that belongs to the domain of actuality, that is, of the surface pattern of events. The surface of nature is indeed chaotic, or at least random; the point of an experimental operation is precisely to effect an artificial closure of this flux, that noise, interference, disorder or mess, the form of the complex, irregular and novel entanglements of the open-systemic world, so as to identify a structure, generative mechanism or field which operates irrespective of both the disorder and that closure alike. The objects of scientific investigation, such as causal laws, must therefore be understood as transfactually efficacious tendencies or mechanisms which exist and act, irrespective of the closure or otherwise of the systems in which they occur. That is to say order in science must be understood at a level behind the pattern of events, defining the necessity for a conception of reality as transcending both events and experiences alike. Thus the law of gravity operates on the objects in the room in which you are sitting reading this, whether or not those objects are actually falling to the ground.

The evident absurdity of identifying laws of nature with patterns of events, once this analysis has been given, does not

mean that it is necessarily an easy thing, to give up. Indeed there may be reasons intrinsic to social reality which make the philosophy of empirical, rather than transcendental, realism the superficially plausible philosophy of 'ordinary' life; because much of our existence is routinised, regimented and mechanistic, we do tend to think in terms of the routinised, regimented and mechanistic categories of empiricism. Science in fact marks a break, as the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard correctly noted, from the world of 'everyday life', that is the world of the categories which reflect the surface features of our reality as we experience and live them. Nevertheless, although empirical realism, that is the ontology of empiricism or positivism, may gain a certain currency from the world in which experience is normally categorised and lived, going into this world in any degree of philosophical depth shows that empiricism is transparently inapplicable there. Such everyday activities as making and drinking a cup of coffee presuppose the reality and efficacy (the intransitivity and transfactuality) of the objects and laws constituting the phenomena concerned (that is, whether or not one makes or drinks the coffee).

Thus the characteristic themes of the first phase of critical realism, transcendental realism, highlighted the **intransitivity** and **transfactuality** of the being investigated by science, which is also the true nature of being in the objective world in which we live. In this world, objects exist (hence intransitivity) and act (hence transfactuality) independently of what we, as agents, do. Metaphilosophically, the basic error was that of the epistemic fallacy, the reduction of being to knowledge. Ideologically this functioned to stamp or authenticate current knowledge. And experientially it confirmed the surface structure, the routinised nature of the world in which we live.

Of course once we have made the basic distinction between knowledge and being, or more generally between beliefs and their objects, then we must see beliefs as themselves part of being. Hence false and illusory beliefs are as much a part of being as true, non-illusory ones, and as such are real. To say that a belief is illusory is to say that it has no real object, i.e.

that there is nothing in reality which corresponds to it or which it reflects or adequately expresses. It is not to say that that belief, illusory as it is, does not exist or that it is without causes or effects. In fact unless the false or illusory belief existed there would be no point in exposing its falsity or illusory nature, no point in criticising it. Illusions then are real; and so too are contradictions, errors, category mistakes; norms, meanings and feelings and indeed everything—and more—that can be thought at all. Thus we have the radical idea of the all-inclusiveness of ontology. The second principle I wish to articulate is thus:

(2) The Principle of the All-inclusiveness of Ontology

This principle may be illustrated by my three-fold analysis of the self in Chapter Two. There I argued that there are within our existing understanding of the self three broad ideas, the first of which is **illusory**; the second of which has a **relative**, transient and contextual reality; and the third of which has an **absolute reality**. These conceptions are the conceptions of

(i) the ego;
(ii) the embodied personality; and
(iii) the transcendentally real self.

The ego understood as a self separate from other selves and the rest of being is, I maintain, an illusion; the self in the sense of an embodied personality—itself (at least) three-fold in constitution—constituted by our minds and thoughts, our emotional makeup and feelings, and our physical bodies is certainly real, but it is a changeable reality, very difficult to pin down; while the transcendentally real self is something which endures but is manifest most of the time only in the context of a totality in which it is both dominated and occluded by elements other than itself.

If this analysis is correct then the ego, that is the sense of the self as distinct from all other selves and the rest of being

is as much an illusion as a belief in witches or in phlogiston. Nevertheless it, just like the belief in witches (or in phlogiston) has real effects; and is indeed just the sense of who I am, the sense of myself (the sense of the Meadian socially determined 'me') which is accentuated and most characteristic of our society, in which individuals typically see themselves as opposed to each other, and treat the rest of being outside themselves, from which they differentiate and demarcate themselves, as a field for their instrumental (calculative) reasoning and manipulation, a field they must dominate and can feel free to exploit or use as they wish.[18] This is the philosophy of a society driven by the logic of desire at a motivational level, conditionality at a transactional level and exploitation at a systemic level—in contemporary times, most obviously and potently, of capitalism.

Our egocentricity, our sense of our own specific separateness from the rest of being, though illusory, is one (contingent) aspect of our embodied personalities. But these personalities are complex and changing formations, which vary from context to context and over time. This is what is meant by saying they are relative realities.[19] Indeed it is not even clear what we should refer to as being ourselves. Thus, are our genes, ancestors or parents, our nationality, class or education, our beliefs, moods and sensations, our possessions, attachments and aversions part of ourselves or not? Are our children or parents part of oneself? Is one's car or one's dog? Or even one's hairstyle or moods or beliefs part of oneself? This self, though difficult to pin down and unstable in meaning, is nevertheless real. Certainly we have bodies and emotions and minds. Certainly as embodied feeling and thinking beings we are differentiated from other embodied feeling and thinking beings and our embodiment defines the point of agency, that is the point from which we must act.

[18] It is this 'I' which votes, fights, owns, marries, lives, gets ill and dies.

[19] In terms of the terminology that I introduced in FEW the ego is a demi-reality; the embodied personality is a relative reality and the transcendentally real self is an absolute reality.

The third conception of the self is the idea of the transcendentally real self, that is the ground which constitutes us and underpins everything we do. This cannot be elaborated any more at the moment, but to it I will return.

This three-fold analysis of the self can be mapped on to the basic analysis of transcendental realism which differentiates:

> The **real**, as greater than but including or encompassing the **actual** (e.g. the patterns of events) which in turn is greater than, but includes, the domain of the **empirical** or experience.
> Thus an experience of a pattern of events can be illusory (in the way that I am claiming the ego is), while the pattern of events can be highly unstable (thus a relative reality, like the embodied personality) and all the same generated by enduring (and transfactually enduring) structures and mechanisms, beings and agencies at the level of the non-actual (or incompletely actualised) and non-empirical (or incompletely experienced) real. On this analysis of the self, the transcendentally real self, that I am positing is just the generative mechanism analogue, the deep structure, the underlying causally efficacious field which, together with all the other agencies that exist in being, co-determines our behaviour considered at the level of the actual, that is, what we do, think and feel as embodied personalities.

This leads us naturally to the third principle on which our argument is built:

(3) The Principle of Dispositional Realism

This principle establishes the ontological, epistemological and logical priority of the possible, the implicit, the enfolded, the involved, over the actual, the explicit, the unfolded, the evolved. The priority of the possible over the actual follows

immediately from the tripartite analysis of laws established by transcendental realism, that is the theory that laws, the tendencies (transfactually efficacious) of things, mechanisms, structures, fields, etc. may be possessed without being exercised, and exercised without being manifest or actualised (or, as we say, 'realised') in any particular sequence of events (which in turn may be actualised without being perceived or detected, i.e. experienced, by human beings).

But dispositional realism can also be motivated in other ways, by an analysis of the dialectic of scientific knowledge, and by analysis of what must be the case for or at any ultimate level of knowledge. Thus when a scientist has discovered or identified a sequence of events she must posit a structure or mechanism which generates that sequence; that is (she presupposes) there must be a reason located at a deeper level or broader swathe of reality why it behaves the way it does, that is, she must ascribe to something (in being) the power or possibility to manifest in that way; and such a being will have, in general, powers and possibilities to manifest in ways which it does not; so as knowledge grows and develops, ever deeper and more all-encompassing levels of being reveal the universe to consist of ever greater levels of possibility (and always more possibilities than are or could be actualised). Similarly, whenever a scientist comes to a semi-permanent halt in her understanding of reality, then at that level at which an (temporary or perhaps permanent) ultimatum (epistemologically speaking) is reached the scientist must always ascribe to reality the power to manifest in the scientist's experience that level of being. Thus in the end possibilities are the ultimata.

But further arguments also establish the priority of the possible over the actual. Thus, anything which is actualised must have pre-existed its actualisation as a possibility; and nothing which is actualised was never a possibility. Moreover, a possibility can and must exist independently of its actualisation, but the converse is not the case; and the principle (2), i.e. the all-inclusiveness of ontology necessitates that we are in this way committed to modal realism. Moreover, everything that happens in a process is implicit, as a potential, at the very beginning

of that process; and in this way is enfolded in being (within what, in Bohm's terminology, we could call the implicate order of being, within which all possibilities are nested or embedded).

The next principle is:

(4) The Principle of Categorial Realism

Philosophical categories such as causality, law, process, (space–time), totality; intentionality, agency, consciousness; housing, money, exchange, dominance, exclusion, alienation, etc. are not, as philosophers (such as Kant or Popper) have imagined, merely (or indeed primarily) subjective classifications of the world imposed on the manifold of data. Such categories, if they are real, are intrinsic to, sui generis, constitutive parts of reality itself. Indeed the categories that philosophy articulates are precisely features of the world, but the most abstract or general features of the world. What possible sense could it make to allow the reality of causal laws such as Ohms law, Boyle's law, but not allow for the reality of causality or lawfulness in being?

Note that this is quite apart from the way in which I earlier argued that the subjective (and therefore epistemological and axiological) realm is itself part of being; what I am saying here is that quite irrespective of our subjective taxonomies, classifications, conceptualisations and categorisations within epistemology (that is, our social, transitive theories), categories are themselves objectively constitutive of reality itself. Unless one takes this position then any realism is ultimately vitiated. For at what point within a series of more general abstract or particular concrete characterisations of some zone or part of reality does one say that the referent of that characterisation, at that point or location in the series, is real? To suppose that atoms are real (moving concretely), but not tables or houses, or (moving abstractly), but not electrons or quarks is clearly an arbitrary position. To suppose that either the molecular structure of water or its 'topological figure of

eight' flow is not real, is as arbitrary as supposing that some particular sample or volume of water such as what I have here in this glass, or what is over there in that lake, or what is contained in that jug, or stored in that tank is not real.

Once one accepts categorial realism one can see that philosophical critique and argumentation can play a vital role in increased understanding of the world and in projects of liberation, empowerment, demystification, etc. Thus one way of interpreting the idea that categories are merely subjective classifications of the world is to say that after all philosophical views and theories are just a matter of subjective preference, so extruding philosophy from any implication or causal efficacy in the social order of being. Conversely, coupling **(4)** with **(2)** allows us to build up a stratified conception of categorial structures in which we can see a false, or an irrealist or alienated/alienating or reified/reifying categories as embedded within true, realist, non-alienated, non-reifying categories. And this enables us to begin to dissolve an apparent paradox: how, if CR is true of the world, is it that most previous and indeed existing philosophy is irrealist? We can now see the irrealism of hitherto existing philosophy as reflecting the surface, false categorial structure of the world; while CR attempts progressively to unearth the deeper structures within which that or those false structures are embedded. There is recursion, at all levels, within reality.

This takes us then to the next principle

(5) The Principle of Alethic Realism

This principle depends on a four-componential analysis of truth.[20] Thus to say that something is true is first of all to say 'trust me, act on it'. This is

[20] *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, p. 217 or *Plato Etc.*, p. 64.

(i) Truth as Normative–Fiduciary

Truth here expresses a social bond, a commitment, a pledge of trust. At a second level of analysis to say that something is true is to say that it is epistemically warranted or justified; it is to say that the belief (or action or whatever) is epistemically grounded (by the facts of the matter, including the established theories which bear on it).

This is

(ii) Truth as Adequating, Epistemically Warranted

But at a third level of analysis to say that something is true is to make an absolute or categorial statement about the world. If I say that grass is green I am expressing in my speech action that aspect of the nature of the world which is precisely most adequately characterised by the statement that grass is green; in this way I am expressing being in language. This therefore is

(iii) Truth as Referential–Expressive

As straddling the epistemic/ontic, transitive/intransitive/objective divides, as expressing being in language, beliefs, action. But there is an even deeper level of the analysis of truth, in which truth is ontological (and intransitive, that is characteristically independent of human beliefs). This is

(iv) Truth as Alethic, as Real

At this level the truth of something is the real ground or reason for the way that thing is. Thus the truth of the fact that

this glass contains water is or lies in its being constituted by a substance whose molecular structure is H_2O, that is a substance with the molecular structure of water, which accounts for its manifest properties, such as tending to boil at a hundred degrees centigrade. It is the absence of this level of analysis, turning on ontological stratification, that explains the paradoxes and problems of traditional epistemology. Thus the problem of induction is immediately resolved once we realise that there is a real reason, inherent in the deep structure of a thing, such as copper, which explains why it is that copper must conduct electricity. Were we to rely only on inductive enumeration then clearly it would be the case that no matter how many samples of copper we found and tested, there would always be the possibility of an instance of copper which would not conduct electricity (witness the discovery of 'black swans'). Once we realise in philosophy that there is, and in science we can come to know, the reason in being (typically at a deeper or more encompassing level of being which is the alethic truth of the manifest level or property of being), then we know the reason why copper must conduct electricity, namely its possession of a free electron. Then anything which did not conduct electricity could not possibly be copper. It is recognition of this deep ground or reason inherent in the nature of being that is required to dissolve the paradoxes and problems of traditional philosophy.

But once we accept that truth is real, we can also begin to understand how it is that a false theory operates. Thus let us revert to the empiricist theory of causal laws, namely that they are empirical invariances. Outside the laboratory the scientist who believes his theory must act as if causal laws were transfactually efficacious, that is still at work even where there are no empirical invariances. Or indeed science would be (*a*) inapplicable outside the laboratory, and moreover (*b*) false. Thus to explain the collapse of a bridge or a plane crash the applied scientist must assume that the laws of physics, empirically identified or confirmed in the laboratory, must apply in the open world (and, in the totality of their determinations) and account for the collapsed bridge or plane crash. This necessary presupposition of truth by a false belief or

theory, if it is to be plausible, sustainable or causally efficacious, takes us on to the next principle.

(6) The Principle of the TINA Formation

A TINA formation in its simplest form just specifies any complex totality in which a false structure or level or belief co-exists with a true one. The nature of the relationship between the true and the false here is crucial. Thus the false theory depends on, presupposes in practice, the true one; even though the false one may dominate and even occlude the alethically true component of the totality which is that particular TINA formation. When Rousseau said that man is born free, but is everywhere in chains, his meaning was this: that slavery, as a social form, actually presupposes but at the same time stymies and opposes the freedom of human beings. When Marx analyses the capitalist mode of production as a complex totality in which the relatively superficial categories of exchange mask and ideologically mystify and dominate the alethically true, more basic real categories of production (misdescribed in terms of the categories of exchange), then he must be understood as saying that in the complex form he is analysing, the categories of exchange are falsely used to describe the categories of production on which they depend, which they misdescribe, mystify (mask or screen) and dominate, so hiding the secret of the capitalist mode of production, the source of surplus value, its extraction from unpaid labour, a mechanism which he isolates by formulating a pair of distinctions which traditional theory overlooks, namely between

(a) the exchange value and use value of a commodity; and
(b) labour and labour power.

In exchange for the reproduction of his labour power, the capitalist buys the use value of his labour, which generates

the profit, more generally the surplus value, which is the dynamic of capitalism.

The sphere of exchange for Marx then dominates and occludes the reality of the sphere of production which depends on unpaid labour. Put in the more general philosophical terms of DCR, what we could say here is that the totality of master–slave relationships depends entirely on the creativity of slaves who must generate in some way a surplus or (generically) the energy for that relationship to be sustained. The analysis of TINA formations is essential to the whole project of ideology–critique, of demystification and the emancipatory potential of philosophy generally.

In fact, the characteristic arguments of the philosophy of Meta-Reality depend upon the necessary presupposition of the true by the false, the good by the evil; love by hate, creativity by regimentation/mechanisation, etc., freedom by heteronomy (oppression or servitude, etc.), non-duality by duality, enchantment by disenchantment. To stress again, this is consistent with, indeed it is the condition of, the causal efficacy, of the false, illusory, unfree; of oppression, disenchantment, etc. And its overthrow increases the zone of freedom, truth, non-duality, enchantment, etc. Moreover, there is a unilateral dependency at work here, in the sense that the false or emergent or heteronomous level could not exist without the true or more essential or autonomous level, but that level of truth, freedom, etc could exist without the emergent heteronomous level.

This analysis actually applies very deeply to the totality of social forms. Thus monetary, market and contractual relations presuppose a layer or level of spontaneous or unconditional social relations. This has been seen by some development economists who have pointed out that the invisible hand of the market very often presupposes the (not so invisible) handshake. More generally it is easy to see that any monetary transaction presupposes a level of social trust. Thus if I go into a newsagent and ask for a newspaper the tacit presupposition of the newsagent who hands me one is that I will in fact pay for it. And money itself depends entirely, as is well enough

known, on the fact that people are willing to trust that notes, coins, etc. will continue to be exchangeable for material commodities. Again, a band of robbers could not hold together for a moment unless there was a level or degree of trust, solidarity and unconditional commitment between them

We can now move on from the analysis of a TINA formation to two further principles.

(7) The Definition of the Project of Liberation as Shedding; and (8) The Understanding of the Dialectic of Liberation as Depending on the Asymmetry of Axiology and Emancipation

Thus liberation is essentially the removal or elimination of unwanted and unnecessary determinations; the shedding of what is inconsistent with one's true or essential self. Interestingly such shedding results in the expansion not the contraction of the being which does the shedding. Thus demystification or elimination of illusions, like the elimination of all those levels or degrees or aspects of heteronomous determination, enables the embodied personality, previously encumbered and constrained, now shorn or shed of these illusions to grow, develop, realise more of its potentialities than it could before. And this depends on that vital asymmetry that these illusions, or heteronomous determinations, could not exist without the truth or freedom that they presuppose. Thus the regimentation of a production line in a factory or the routine of work in a shop or office continually presupposes the spontaneous creativity and initiative of the human agents, the 'wage-slaves', involved. Actually, even to reproduce a regularity, to make the same event happen twice is an extremely difficult task (if not indeed impossible). The project of emancipation has always depended on the idea that there is a basic or deep level of being which is in some way shackled or constrained by a more dominant (and potentially occluding,

screening or masking) level, deleterious to the real interest or essential nature of the beings whose potential or essence is being constrained. The topicality of this at our moment in time is precisely that, at whatever dimension of four-planar social being one looks, we are plunging into global crisis, in such a way that the very survival of the species is at stake. Yet the systems, motivations, ecological imbalances, etc. could not be sustained without the ongoing activity of creative, loving human beings. We however could not only survive but would thrive and flourish without the systems and modes of behaviour which suppress us and threaten our very survival.

The basic idea here is that of an essential human nature which is in some way suppressed, distorted and dominated by something other than itself, something which has to be understood in the context of all four planes of social being, namely:

[a] our material transactions with nature;
[b] our social interaction with others;
[c] social structure;
[d] the stratification of our embodied personalities

The philosophy of Meta Reality identifies these essential basic properties as including the creativity, love, freedom, etc. of human beings. Then the argument would be that in terms of all these four dimensions we have to understand something opposed to creativity, such as regimentation or fixation as nevertheless dependent upon it; something opposed to love, such as fear or hatred, as nevertheless dependent upon it;[24] something opposed to freedom, such as slavery or addiction, as nevertheless dependent on it. More generally, turning to the second dimension of social being, the argument is that all social relations depend in some manner on trust and solidarity, which itself depends on our spontaneous, unconditional agency.

[24] Thus consider the way in which the social phenomenon of a war, the very epitome of hatred one might assume, nevertheless depends upon the solidarity of the soldiers at the front, and the support and sustenance of their sisters at home.

We now approach the nub of the argument in developing

(9) The Theory of the Ground-state;
(10) The Theory of the Cosmic Envelope; and
(11) The Theory of Transcendence
and, in particular;
(11*) The Theory of Transcendental Identification in Consciousness, which establishes the implicitly conscious nature of the cosmos and its implications; we then have
(12) The Theory of Transcendental Identification in My Consciousness, establishing
(13) The Principle of Co-presence which depends on the implicitly conscious nature of the cosmos in my or any consciousness.

We will see that principles 12 and 13 certainly have very important implications. These include

(13a) The Principle of Karma, including
(13b) The Principle of the Inevitable Return of Unfulfilled Intentionality or Attachment

These principles are concerned with the residues of **negative incompleteness**. Turning to the residues of (and to an extent the inevitability of) **positive incompleteness** we have:

(13c) The Principle of Commitment to a Eudemonistic Society, and
(13d) The Principle of the Primacy of Self-referentiality, and
(13e) Principles of Syntheses of Self-realisation

Principle **13d** is probably sufficiently important to be re numbered as

(14) The Principle of Subject or Self-referentiality

After discussing **(14)**, we will go on in subsequent sections to discuss three further principles:

(15) The Principle of the Re-enchantment of Reality;
(16) The Principle of the Possibility of the Infinite within the Bounds of the Finite, or the Absolute within the Relative; which is also
(16*) The Principle of the Unlimited Self.

Finally, we have
(17) The Principle of Meta-Reality

Let me now begin to elaborate these principles.

(9) The Theory of the Ground-state

Human beings are characterised by a ground-state. Since human beings are part of the cosmos they must be characterised by what is essential and ultimate to the cosmos. That is, as an emergent part of the cosmos whatever is ultimate to the cosmos must be ingredient in them; therefore, they must be at least in part constituted by what is ultimate to the universe and this ultimate is an essential ingredient within them (characterised, or so I argue, by creativity, love, freedom, etc.).

(10) The Theory of the Cosmic Envelope

Since every other being, as part of the universe, must also be characterised by ground-states, and since those ground-states are all parts of one universe, (i.e. a uni-verse), they must be bound or connected together by what I will call the 'cosmic envelope'.

The next two principles are

(11) The Theory of Transcendence; and (11*) The Theory of Transcendental Identification in Consciousness

Let us consider the key concept of transcendence. There is of course a relative sense of transcendence, in which we say that one position 'transcends' another or some others, including a dichotomy of positions or a contradiction, in the sense that it surpasses and resolves whatever was problematic or incomplete in them. It is in this sense that a superior theory transcends an inferior one. This is the relative sense of transcendence. It is the absolute sense of transcendence with which I am primarily concerned here. This sense of transcendence signifies the breaking down of duality or opposition or separateness within a context. Paradigmatically in this sense of transcendence two or more become one, and in this sense transcendence is just total unity in a context. More precisely, we can make out four concepts or inflections or modes in which such unity or 'oneness' is achieved:

[1] **transcendence outwards**—on to;
[2] **transcendence inwards**—into;
[3] **transcendence on**—ergonic transcendence
[4] **transcendence with**—organic, holistic transcendence

If the first two are features of consciousness, or involve transcendental identification in consciousness, the second two are features of agency, or involve transcendental agency or transcendental unity in agency. As such the first two involve transcendental equation or identification or becoming one in being; while the second two involve becoming one in or in the context of one's agency. The fundamental motif here is that transcendence in this sense involves the overcoming and elimination of duality; i.e. it involves **non-duality**. Let us consider the simplest case of a subject–object duality in which the subject consists in the consciousness of a human being. It is not generally understood that there are two ways, corresponding to [1] and [2], in which this can occur. The subject can lose

itself totally in or to an object; that is go into the object in the sense of becoming one with something other than itself. Thus we can lose ourselves in contemplation of a picture, or absorption in the sound of music; but equally one can in principle, become one with, lose oneself in any object of perception or thought, such as a pen or the corner of a room or a wall or a rock. Most importantly, of course, this losing of oneself is a necessary condition for any kind of inter-subjective communication or understanding at all. Thus to understand what you say I must become one, that is immediately one with that which you say, there cannot be any distinction or discrimination at this point, between your meaning and my-understanding of it (at some level). I will come back to this later.

The second form of transcendence is that in which one loses not one's subjectivity, but any sense of objectivity, that is, in which one retreats or withdraws entirely from the world into oneself, becoming one with oneself and only oneself. It is this which is the goal of most, but not all, meditative practices. At this level we can talk not so much of transcendental identification, but just simply of transcendental consciousness, this consciousness is consciousness at the ground-state, of the ground-state of one's being.[22]

For me to understand you I have to become one with you, in that aspect of your being which I would understand. We presuppose in these acts of transcendental identification with others, a transcendental unity with oneself, but one may not be conscious of this transcendental unity with oneself and the unity achieved in consciousness may be at a point removed, even far removed, from ones ground-state, although that it is possible at all depends ultimately on its connectedness, rootedness or derivability from one's ground-state.

The third kind of transcendence, transcendence on or at or in, is transcendence in agency, that is transcendental identification with one's activity. This is an essential and necessary component of any thing which can be called action at all. Thus

[22] The sense in which this consciousness is present or implicit in all other forms of consciousness is just the sense in which the ground-state is present or implicit in all other phases of one's being or activity.

consider. 'I wish to cook a meal', so I plan the menu, think through in my mind how I will assemble the ingredients, what utensils I will use, etc.; but at some point I must just begin to cook it. At some point action must be spontaneous and basic; that is not action which is done by thinking about action but action which is just done (without thought, that is spontaneously), or we could not act at all. Imagine deciding how one is going to drink a glass of water or formulate a sentence—at some point one must just drink it or speak it; at that point the action is basic; there is no duality involved—in that aspect of one's being one just is one with one's activity.

So far we have seen then that non-duality (at the ground-state) is a necessary condition for any consciousness or self-consciousness at all; transcendental identification with other beings is a necessary condition for any communication or understanding, and transcendental agency (or one might say transcendental identification in agency) is a necessary condition for any action at all. Thus there is nothing mysterious about transcendence or non-duality. Rather, it is an essential condition for our being, our perception and understanding of other beings (most obviously other human beings) and our agency. Without transcendence or non-duality one could not be, perceive or understand or act at all.[22]

The fourth form of transcendence, which I have called organic or holistic transcendence, signifies that kind of unity in context in which the members of a group, say in a team, function so completely in harmony that the differentiation between them in the context of that activity breaks down. Thus one may consider the anticipation of one footballer as to the move his team-mate is going to make; or even more simply and obviously, the unity of the members of an orchestra (or a play) in a performance. This kind of transcendental identification or unity can also be seen by the remarkable way in which pedestrians on the pavement manage to avoid bumping into

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[22] We can now begin to appreciate what distinguishes this philosophy of Meta-Reality from the previous phase of *TDCR*. For the argument of that phase was that there are necessary spiritual presuppositions of

each other; by turn-taking in conversation (features which ethnomethodologists have indeed explored). One might regard this fourth kind of transcendence as being a generalised synthesis of the first and third enfolding transcendental identification with others in respect of a particular form of activity.

Just to rehearse the last stage—noticing the importance of transcendental identification in being, perception and understanding, agency and teamwork involving concepts such as anticipation and attunement to situations and contexts consider the way our sense of self is suspended in absorption in a film or TV drama or reading of a sentence in a magazine or book: these are paradigms of non-duality, paradigms we are all familiar with. If you try, however, to catch yourself at it, that is to notice it, then you lose it, because you immediately set up a separation or duality between that to which you were attuned or absorbed. Thus the old riddle about meditation, if you think you are meditating, then you are not.

There is another set of distinctions which enables us to deepen our understanding of 'transcendence'. Consciousness is characterised by a <u>form</u> and a <u>content</u>. Now just as we can retreat from objectivity and go into subjectivity and achieve transcendental identity therein, or lose one's subjectivity in transcendental identification in consciousness with an object, so one can lose the content of consciousness in transcendental identification with its pure, abstract form, achieving an 'inner-emptiness' of content (this is the position of 'no thought,

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emancipatory projects, and in principle emancipatory projects of all kinds; and these involve conceptions of, for instance, a good society or essential human properties or the nature of being (for example, that it is ultimately constituted by spirit). Within TDCR the concept of transcendence is an important concept insofar as it suggests a route to the ultimate, be it oneself or the ideal (as in the good) society or the nature of the universe (or God). Here, however, non-duality is seen to underlie all phases of our consciousness, our being, our social interaction and our agency. This is an enormous difference. Transcendence is not something rare and special, but something which is a constituent part of every moment and phase of our social life; it is so basic an ingredient in everyday life that we and the philosophers have not even noticed it. <u>Moreover, in the philosophy of Meta-Reality we can be non-dual beings while acting in the world of duality.</u>

no mind', mindlessness), so equally one can lose the form by absorption in its content. This is mindfulness. The first is the absence of content, the second is its repletion, the saturation or plenitude of consciousness by or with its content. Both are positions of transcendence or non-duality – mindlessness and mindfulness. But mindfulness, the total focus, attentiveness of consciousness on its activity, its absorption in a unity with it, eventually passes over into spontaneity. As the activity becomes practiced, becomes part of, or is one with the innermost being of the agent, the activity acts like a mantra in meditation, such that the concentrated focus, the undivided mind loses itself and passes into the activity. The mind empties itself in its activity and the activity is no longer controlled by the focused, undivided attentive mind, but performs itself, effortlessly, efficiently, without strain. This effortless efficiency in activity is activity in the ground-state. Such effortless, spontaneous activity must be acquired and learnt, but when we have done so there is no more mind and no more thought, but free unconditional spontaneous activity. This is the goal of meditative activity.

At the same time, the retreat from content into pure form results in a mode of consciousness which can only be characterised by such formulae as sat-chit-anand – blissful consciousness of existence (or being or truth). This is that transcendental consciousness of the ground-state, at a level of supra-mental consciousness, awareness without thought or mental (or emotional) content, which underpins all other levels of consciousness. It is the state of least excitation, the vacuum state, the null point present in all other states of consciousness as a constitutive condition of them. It is the deep essential ultimate ingredient of consciousness, ingredient in all other particular manifest forms of consciousness. But from this level we can act, and when our activity is effortless then we are acting from or in virtue of energy derived from the cosmic envelope, the ground-state of the universe.[24] This is

[24] The consciousness which I have called transcendental consciousness at the ground-state enables implicit consciousness of potentiality, enables

the position of the practical mystic, oriented to universal self-realisation, who acts from or only in consistency with the ground-state.

In fact we can further generalise the concept of transcendence by seeing it as occurring in the case of identification between two discrete terms, even when they are opposed or contradictory. Thus in a sublation in science the transcendence of a contradiction, which is just a sharpened form of a duality, is resolved precisely when the contradiction or opposition between the two terms is dissolved. This is the moment in which positive contraries are transmuted into – and co-exist with, at the point of transition – negative sub-contraries, the moment of transcendence within the transcending moment – in the move towards a more totalising theory – in which the seeds of the new theoretical totality emerges 'out of the blue', de novo, from the space beyond or between thought, the known, the manifest, etc. – or from, as we say, 'nowhere'. This of course unites the absolute and relative senses of 'transcendence' which I differentiated before. And it is this transcendence – in the sense of transcendental emergence – which underpins all creativity and novelty and as such is a feature of all human activity or natural eventuation at all, which is at once:

(a) the presentation of something new;
(b) its emergence from absence; and
(c) its explication from what was implicit, enfolded as a potentiality within being

Be that as it may, I now come on to **(11*)** itself.

In virtue of our capacity to transcendentally identify in consciousness with other objects in the universe, they must be implicitly (if not explicitly) characterised by consciousness (which is enfolded or involved in them). The involution or enfolding of consciousness in matter, which is just an elaboration

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the unfolding of implicit consciousness or of potentiality, or of the alethic truths of other aspects, phases or parts of being. This consciousness of alethia corresponds to consciousness of what the Vedic tradition calls *akasha*.

of the basic point that because our cosmos has given rise to consciousness, then the ultimate essential ingredients within it, must implicitly contain or have the potentiality for consciousness; just by our capacity to identify with in principle any object in the universe allows us to make consistent

(i) synchronic emergent powers materialism, that is the sense in which consciousness is an emergent power of matter which has historically evolved from matter in time and the idea of matter as a synchronic emergent power of consciousness, that is the sense in which consciousness is implicit or enfolded as a potentiality in all matter, and capable of acting back on it, as in agency generally. This is shown, at the very least by our capacity for mind-to-mind action (see Section 4) and consciousness-to-consciousness unity in transcendental identification in consciousness; and

(ii) the emergence and development of life, sentience or vitality and then consciousness in time, i.e. the process of evolution. In short, consciousness is involved or implicit or enfolded within matter; and at the same time evolves, or is unfolded or explicated out of matter as a diachronically emergent power of it, a power which must have been implicit within it for that emergence and in virtue of which we can identify with inanimate and animate but non-conscious being now.

Understanding the theory of transcendence, and in particular the theory of our capacity for transcendental identification in consciousness which establishes the implicitly conscious nature of the cosmos is the first step in understanding the next principles.

(12) The Theory of Transcendental Identification in My Consciousness; and

(13) The Principle of Co-Presence

Understanding that transcendental identification in consciousness establishes the implicitly conscious nature of the universe (TIC) entails (because consciousness is always consciousness of some being, in some being) that is, in the consciousness of some being, that transcendental identification is implicitly or explicitly in my consciousness, i.e. transcendental identification in consciousness (TIC) implies the possibility of transcendental identification in my consciousness, TIMC. This establishes (13) the theory of co-presence and reciprocity.

We have already seen that (11*) the thesis of TIC makes consistent the implicitly conscious nature of all being, including purely material, inanimate physical being, thus SEPC; and the idea of the diachronic development of consciousness in time — thus SEPM. If matter is implicitly conscious, then everything in the universe is implicitly conscious, that is, has consciousness enfolded within it. In the same way everything in the universe is implicitly enfolded within my consciousness and implicitly enfolded within me; that is, every object in the universe is enfolded within my consciousness, that is co-present within me.

Let us try and make sense of this. It is not that every object in the universe is the same as every other object in the universe. Concrete singularity applies here, as everywhere. It is rather that every object in the universe is contained or enfolded within my consciousness, that is, is co-present within me. As I can understand you, as I can love you, I must already implicitly contain you; that is my understanding of you entails your co-presence within me; as my unconditional love does too; and my capacity creatively to be at one with a medium or instrument implies the co-presence of that medium or instrument within me. So every object in the universe is implicitly contained within or co-present within every other object or being in the universe. Thus the hurt that I do to you, I carry within me, since you are co-present or implicitly contained within me (just as I am within you). It follows from this that I cannot be free until I have expunged or shed that hurt – this is the secret basis of karma.

(13a) The Principle of Karma

The key to karma is this. The hurt which you, X, give (or you would give) to Y is immediately experienced by you, because

(i) [The law of co-presence] Y is co-present within you, a part of you, and as such, it, that is the hurt, must be expunged, shed, cease to be part of you, before you can become free. Moreover,

(ii) [The law of reciprocity] just as if you smile at a rose, the rose smiles back at you, it reciprocates, implicitly (in the implicate order [of being, that is the order presupposed by creativity, emergence and becoming]) if not explicitly. Further,

(iii) [The law of attraction] because you contain the hurt that you have done, you will also attract [similar] hurt back to you.

(iv) [Law of release] when the hurt that you have done (and is within you) is consciously experienced by you (felt/expressed within you) and you can just let go of it, that is not cling to that hurt, but release it, then you are, in that moment and in virtue of that (acceptance and release), free of it; i.e. the hurt that you have done has been erased, cleared, annulled; and you have expunged (or 'atoned for') it.

These are the four aspects of karma. Thus karma is an internal relationship within the being, not something extrinsic to it (this is in fact evinced by the Sanskrit definition or understanding of karma as action [plus its consequences, that is considered in relation to its consequences, i.e. as a totality])—though of course the immediate agency of the karmic consequence may be external. Karma in this way is fundamentally a self-doing. Closely connected to (iv) is

(v) [The law of love, giving and forgiving] When there is love—love [which, as a basic ingredient or ground-state quality, is sufficient unto itself and requires or possesses no further justification, support or extraneous consideration]—or just giving or forgiving, there is no karma. Or rather, this is so at least when the love is unconditional. Conditional love (which is really love mixed with some other motive, such as desire, possessiveness, jealousy, lust or fear), *is* karmic (not dharmic).

So every act should be an offering, a gift (a surrender to the divine in some form or other); and every react received is a present, an opportunity; and if it is accepted (i.e. full responsibility is taken for it), it too is a gift, the gift of the opportunity to learn, grow and develop. In transcending or developing a new capacity to transcend a new set of circumstances we expand into a new, fuller and deeper, or richer, more abundant or expansive totality or self.

This also has implications for the topic of reincarnation. For as this hurt that you have done is implicitly contained, as an abiding memory or presence, within the psychic being or soul of the embodied personality, it endures through lives; indeed it is the essence, cause or raison d'être of reincarnation—for the psychic being or soul must clear itself if it is to be self-consistent, that is consistent only with its true nature, i.e. autonomous or free. It follows from this that

(i) Reincarnation, karma, and *moksha* (or liberation – which does not entail *'nirvana'*, however that is understood) are immediately interconnected;
(ii) That this is the whole point in distinguishing the soul or psychic being from the *jivatman*, or concretely singularised/individuated spirit, which is free of heteronomy.
(iii) Embodied personality, psychic being and ground-state are all distinct.

So long as you have any

(a) attachment (that is something not yourself within yourself) and/or
(b) unfulfilled intentionality within you (or within your psychic being), you cannot be free until you have released, cleared, discharged or let go of it. Hence,

(13b) The Principle of the Inevitable Return of Unfulfilled Intentionality or Attachment

The conditional or heteronomously motivated nature of an action will necessitate the return of the split-off (that is the unfulfilled intentionality, the attachment or the conditional or heteronomous formation in its development.) This split-off will be precisely the co-presence as unreleased, within the agent himself; and as such, the agent cannot be free until he or she has shed this aspect which remains within him or her, that is this aspect must be shed or freed by the agent herself, within herself, by herself, through herself, from herself, for herself.

Attachment of any sort (including the negative form of aversion) will automatically result in a split intentionality; that is a split between the action and its consequences, and the resulting split-focus, that is distraction of focus or lack of focus from the action will increase the chances of the failure of the action, that is the non fulfilment of the original intentionality. But in any event any attachment or unfulfilled intentionality will involve the non-transcendence of the situation in which the agent is placed, and the inevitable return of the unfulfilled intentionality or attachment.

In becoming unbound by our actions, we become free of any consequences and any immanent necessity to return to the situation in which they were formed. In this way we become both divine and free in precisely the ways traditionally attributed to God. That is God as not bound by the consequences of his actions and is free and fulfilled, autonomous and boundless in his/her own right. But is it possible for a being, to have such qualities, to have such unboundedness,

lack of limitation in a finite world? Yes, as we shall see when we discuss principle 16.

Even more basically (since the last point involves only my liberation in the sense of elimination of negative incompleteness), I cannot be free until you are free, since you (and your heteronomy, that is unfreedom) are implicitly contained (just as your hurt was) within me. And therefore I cannot be free till all other beings, which are equally essential and co-present within me, are free. This is the ideal of the Bodhisattva, turning on the indivisibility of freedom. In practice this means that as one deepens one's own understanding one draws into one's awareness and consciousness increasing swathes of being so that the pain of another becomes increasingly experienced as my own pain, and the unfreedom of another becomes experienced as my own unfreedom, and this leads us to the standpoint of a eudemonistic society, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. In such a society your freedom, development and flourishing matters just as much to me as my own; and I cannot rest until it is realised.

(13c) The Principle of Commitment to a Eudemonistic Society

This principle of the indivisibility of freedom in a conception of a good or eudemonistic society is implicit even in the golden rule—'do unto others as you would be done by'. This is not to say that you should treat others as if they were the same as yourself, in the sense of act towards them without respect for their own uniqueness and idiosyncrasy, but to so act towards them precisely with respect for their uniqueness, which will imply sensitised solidarity to their own dialectical specificity. What it does however mean is that one understands the other as in some way contained within oneself so that any action that one does to the other is also and equally an action done to oneself. Showing the principle of dialectical universality

entails acting, as we have seen, in accordance with sensitised solidarity, concretely singularised sensitivity. The principle of transcendental identification in my consciousness entails,

(13d) The Principle of Subject or Self-referentiality

That is the priority of self-change and self-transformation in all activity. This is the principle of the hermetic standpoint. How can it be justified? The only point from which we can act is necessarily ourselves. We can only act on the world from where we, as physically embodied personalities, are (in the same way we can only learn, understand, perceive, discover or create something from where we are.) Thus, if I desire to bring about a universal or global or cosmic transformation, I must act in such a way as will tend or help to bring it about, but the only action I can perform, the only thing I can do is my action, an action of mine, however much I am acting in unison and in accord with every other being, every other person in my peer group (e.g. trade union or other collectivity, class, gender, species, etc.).

The point of agency is always that of the embodied personality; but at the same time we have seen that everything else in the universe is implicitly contained within my consciousness, that is implicit in my ground-state; so that ultimately the only way I can act is in such a way as to be oriented to universal self-realisation, that is the realisation of all other beings in the universe. We are therefore now into

(13e) The Principle of Syntheses of Self-realisation

We arrive at a remarkable synthesis of standpoints, namely the mutual entailment of radical hermeticism, or an appreciation of the necessity of the standpoint of subjective or self-referentiality as entailing precisely commitment to universal

self-realisation, that is the liberation and flowering of all other beings, ultimately in the cosmos, so precisely universal self-realisation. In practice this means that the project of self-realisation must always be one which is materially embodied, practically engaged and socially realised. Thus we have the second synthesis of self-realisation, the synthesis of self-referentiality, or the principle of the hermetic tradition and the principle of what I would call practical mysticism.

Thus to be free, to have shed heteronomous determinations, is at the same time necessarily to be this-worldly, to be concerned with the freedom of all other beings. Practical mysticism is the way of the gnostic being. This way is not to enjoy an existence outside this world, or removed from daily practice; it is rather to be engaged in that practice from a perspective of its maximal emancipatory efficacy, so we arrive at a critique of the 'beautiful soul', the renunciate who lives in a monastery or ivory tower removed from practice in the world. Actually these syntheses were already proleptically implicit in DCR, which the philosophy of Meta-Reality at once further develops and transcends. In DCR the emphasis was on transformed transformative praxis. If you are concerned at the lack of effect your transformative praxis has on the world, the only way you can improve the situation is by transforming that transformative praxis, which means operating at [d] in four-planar social being. But any attempt to liberate oneself in isolation from practice engaged with or on the world cannot succeed. For that world is a part of you and you can no more be free until that world is free than you can drive a car without petrol, no matter how finely tuned the engine or wondrous its upholstery.

Equally one can see there is no incompatibility in the standpoint traditionally associated with spirituality and the standpoint traditionally associated with radical political transformation. For if, for example, the biggest constraint on projects of human emancipation or even survival is capitalism, then the actions of a realised or enlightened being is to transform (overthrow or undermine) that social structure. At the same time such a being will realise he cannot do it by

getting others to perform his acts for him, that is, he cannot act through the mediation of another; the point of agency has always got to be the person himself, whatever contribution he or she makes to the overthrow of capitalism is always going to come with some change in their own practice or being.

The result would be an entirely different kind of 'religiosity' and an entirely different kind of 'politics'. Thus the political impulse would not be directed at getting other people to transform themselves or trying to act through the mediation, which means the manipulation, of other human beings; and at the same time the development of the spiritual standpoint would not entail suspension from engaged everyday activity. Thus one would have to question any attempt to abstractly universalise or generalise some religious technique or practice, such as solitary meditation (though for many people this may work), since the criterion of the success of any transcendence achieved must be to what extent it makes that human being a better person and thus a better transformative agent in practice. At the same time, the thrust of Marx's 'Third Thesis on Feuerbach', 'who will educate the educators?', must be taken seriously. For without a standpoint oriented to radical self-transformation any socialist or other emancipatory project will merely replace or displace one set of master-slave relations with another.

Thus both traditional religious and traditional political attitudes must be refashioned. For both have been founded on fundamental category mistakes. The first by thinking that it is possible to liberate oneself without liberating that part of oneself which contains the whole of the rest of being. Such projects of liberation founder on the very ego that they would formally deny; that is, they presuppose that such a liberation is a self-realisation: it is not—it is an ego-(realisation)-trip. By the same token the traditional political standpoint has assumed that it is possible to impose emancipation or freedom from without, externally, heteronomously; it is not—*freedom to*, unlike *freedom from*, cannot be imposed from without or enforced; it can only come from within, it can only be a self-emancipation. Certainly one can unlock the prison door, but the prisoner must walk out. So if you are oppressing or manipulating someone

else then it is certainly a good and proper thing to stop doing so; and in so doing you will be aiding the cause of human emancipation and universal self-realisation (as you will also be helping your own liberation or realisation). But it does not matter how many doors are unlocked if one does not know how to walk through them; and the only doors that one can in fact unlock are the doors of one's own prison cell. Thus we arrive at the (from the standpoint of dualistic philosophy) paradox that the only change that one can effect is self-change, and that all self-change, to be truly authentic and efficacious, must be oriented to universal self-realisation. Or, otherwise put, the only project of collective emancipation or universal self-realisation in which one can engage is one which understands the priority of, necessity for and impossibility of anything other than action oriented to self-change; but that such change, to be optimally efficacious, must be oriented to collective human emancipation and ultimately universal self-realisation, or what some western medieval theologians called 'theosis', that is, the maximisation of the presence of God or the divine on earth.

We can now see that there are four important implications of the argument concerning the ground-state, the cosmic envelope and transcendental identity consciousness or transcendental identification, that establishes the necessity for a conception of the cosmic envelope as also being implicitly or explicitly conscious; and the compatibility of a conception of the cosmos as implicit or potential or enfolded consciousness with the conception of the cosmos as a developing material system through time, with consciousness as an emergent product in time. These four essential additions are:

(1) The argument from transcendental identification in consciousness to transcendental identification in my consciousness—that is all being is not only implicitly conscious; it is implicitly conscious in my acts of transcendental identification in my consciousness, from which it follows that all being is implicitly contained within my consciousness; i.e. to say that every object is implicitly co-present within me.

(2) Following from this is the theorem of co-presence: that I cannot be free until every being is free, because every being is implicitly contained within me. This therefore takes one to the standpoint of the Bodhisattva, and that of the eudemonistic society, which is also the standpoint of practical mysticism, implied by the 'axiological imperative', that is, the condition that I cannot but act, more especially in the context of global crisis.

(3) At the same time the very condition of physical embodiment means that the only position from which we can act in the world, as embodied personalities, is through ourselves, that is through the acts of our embodied agency; similarly, this is the only position from which we can learn, understand, communicate, love or experience or do anything in the world of embodiment (defined by physical separation and distance). So the point of agency, my only point of agency is myself, that is my embodied personality; and it follows that it is only through my embodied personality and its acts that I can become free, fulfilled, or, which is a corollary of the drive or conatus to my own freedom, free or help to fulfil anyone else. This then takes us to the fundamental principle of the hermetic tradition that is the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality.

(4) So if it is our interconnectedness that defines the standpoint of practical mysticism, it is our distinctiveness as embodied personalities and ultimately of the geo-histories we have had as embodied personalities (over in principle a succession of lives) which defines the priority of self-change or more generally the principle of subject-referentiality, i.e. the standpoint of hermeticism. In this way, pursuing other syntheses of self-realisation, we can also see the mutual implication of (*a*) radical transformative agency; and (*b*) deep spirituality, brought together relatively early on in the development of critical realism in the conception of transformed transformative praxis (cf

Marx's 'third thesis on Feuerbach', 'who will educate the educators?'). In practice this means that to be truly spiritual one has to be committed to, and an active agent in, radical transformative processes[25] (that is, if you like, that one has to isolate the principal blocks and constraints on the realisation of the common ideal of spiritual and secular emancipatory projects—such as a society in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all, a society in which 'ego' has disappeared to such an extent that your development is in principle and practice as important as my own.[26] This will necessitate the abolition of the totality of master-slave relationships, i.e. all relationships of exploitation, oppression, exclusion and so on. Conversely, such radical emancipatory practices themselves presuppose that working on self or 'working in', that shedding of heteronomous determinations and egocentricity (together with all the negative emotions, intellectual or mental fixations and physical malaises with which they are associated). For example if one

[25] The most radical transformative position, the most transformative and totalising one will invariably not be one of taking sides within a current dispute, which will merely reflect two poles of a duality on the surface of reality, but will consist of taking sides against the grounds of that duality, that is sublating it and cutting the ground from under it. This sublation or transcendence (in the relative sense of transcendence) will itself be rooted in the ground-state, that is in a position of unity with the most fundamental aspects of being (and as such it will involve transcendence in the absolute sense).

[26] It is vital to understand that this does not mean that my own development is not important. On the contrary, my own development, predicated on my self-love, is precisely a condition for my love and understanding and action oriented towards the development of other beings. Self-love is the condition for any love, and indeed the development of any benign or valuable power or quality. We must also understand that the only way that this position can be arrived at is precisely in accordance with the standpoint of subject-referentiality, that is your development is as important as my own, I can only help your development through my own acts, which will be a part of my own development process, not yours.

> wishes to isolate capitalism as the main constraint on human emancipation or the main factor threatening the survival of the species or inducing global crisis, it is important to appreciate that the only form of revolution possible is a spiritual one; and that anti-capitalism itself presupposes a commitment to spiritual change (i.e. self-development). Conversely, commitment or understanding of the spiritual presuppositions of being immediately implies commitment to radical transformative action, though as I have already noted, the form of this action may be very different from that which customarily goes by the name; just as this form of spirituality is very different from that practised in traditional religious or 'non-religious' forms.

We have seen then, that (12) the theory of transcendental identification in my consciousness (TIMC), or (13) the principle of co-presence, which flows from the ubiquity and basic character of transcendence and non-duality in social life and indeed all being entail.

14. The Principle of Subject or Self-referentiality

This principle also entails a critique of imposed or heteronomous emancipation, a critique of current practices of education and positioning occupational structure; and a generalised critique of organisations and institutions as including the failure to take account of internal relations, external economies, invisible ingredients, qualitative considerations and subtle connections.

If transcendence establishes a critique of subject–object duality,[27] the collapse of that duality in transcendental identification and access immediately entails:

[27] Moving towards this critique of that duality, we encompass also a critique of subject–predicate duality and analytical/formal/instrumental/left-brain thought or reasoning.

15. The Principle of the Re-enchantment of Reality

i.e. the identity of being and meaning and of being and value, which will be discussed in Section 5. Next we have

(16) The Principle of the Possibility of the Infinite within the Bounds of the Finite;

which entails

(16*) The Principle of the Unlimited Self

Of course as embodied and physically embodied, such beings will be precisely constrained by the limits of the physical world. In what way then can human beings acquire the capacity to become unlimited beings, beings not bound to situations or actions deriving from the past. Now it is an elementary (though not well known)[28] theorem in logic that for any finite set of descriptions, there are an infinite number of descriptions consistent with it. That is, to move away from the meta-language to the object language, that for any finite set of objects or constraints there are an infinite number of possibilities consistent with it. This defines the sense in which in a finite or limited or constrained world we can be infinite or unlimited; and also the sense in which there are an infinite number of ways of being infinite or unlimited, so that our concrete singularity is preserved. Therefore an unlimited or boundless self is indeed possible and a uniquely unlimited or boundless self as well, within a limited or finite world.

Moreover, there is no reason why our boundlessness or lack of limitation should not grow and develop; why the absolute cannot encompass an ever-deepening process of expansion, since we know from transfinite mathematics that there are gradeable levels of infinity, and furthermore, infinitely gradeably so (so that the absolute need have no conceivable end).

[28] cf *A Realist Theory of Science*.

To put this in a nutshell: we, as embodied (and so finite) personalities in a physically constrained world are just potentially those infinite boundless beings, rendered limited and bound by our own heteronomous determinations, our illusions and the totality of the other blocks on our being which we have internalised or made a part of ourselves. As we dig down to our ground-state, become more attuned (or in tune) with it, the more self-aware we become, the more we expand our capacity to change the world; since our reach is increasingly deep what is encompassed within our transcendental agency, through our agency as physically embodied selves, will become greater, fuller, wider and deeper; so that our inner responsiveness or submissiveness, i.e. self-consistency or consistency with our ground-states, will be reflected in an outer submissiveness or responsiveness, or coherence with the rest of the cosmic envelope.

(17) The Principle of Meta-Reality

The philosophy of Meta-Reality, pivoting on the theories of the ground-state, the cosmic envelope and transcendence (including TIC) and co-presence (including TIMC), is presupposed by all, including purely secular theories of emancipation (which, insofar as they have not articulated them, take on the aspect of, theoretically, a TINA formation). If such a position is a spiritual one, then it is consistent with secularism, or consistent with all faiths and with no faith. Throughout, the central theoretical figure within our conception of being or ontology is that of the TINA formation, which depends on a fundamental asymmetry, of axiology and emancipation, that the emergent, false or oppressive level is unilaterally dependent on the more basic, true and autonomous order, even though it may dominate and even threaten its existence, just as it typically mystifies, occludes and denies it. But the possibility of liberation depends precisely upon this asymmetry,

that the higher order false level could not exist with the truth on which it feeds, while the truth could survive and would flourish, expand and flower without its parasite.

Liberation depends then upon the shedding of this emergent level. And this simplification or shedding results in expansion rather than contraction. Paradigmatically, in the case of the individual embodied personality, this shedding involves the shedding of the ego and heteronomous forces (thoughts and emotions, habits and anticipations) of determination – indeed everything which is inconsistent with or contrary to its true or essential self. Such a self will of course always be concretely singularised. And this, to reiterate, will result in the expansion rather than contraction of the physically embodied personality. Such a process is not only consistent with but entails universal self-realisation – both in the sense that it will immediately and spontaneously orient itself towards this, and in the sense that it will only be complete with it.

This philosophy of Meta-Reality then goes beyond hitherto existing critical realism, insofar as non-duality, unconditionality and spontaneity are seen to be ubiquitous phenomena essential to everyday life, phenomena tied to the totality of the cosmos. Nevertheless this is a position arrived at through realism, about transcendence, so that realism about transcendence leads into the transcendence of realism itself; and the systematic attempt to think being arrives at a situation in which we think being without thought as basic to any and all being. Moreover, within the philosophy of Meta-Reality, turning on the centrality of concepts of non-duality, transcendental identification, unification and co-presence, everything revolves around concepts of identity, identification and unity (though these identities are not simple or punctiform, but complex, holistic, differentiated and developing), while the philosophy from which it emerged, critical realism, is precisely a philosophy of non-identity, which is indeed the principle theme of 1M- ontology as developed systematically in (1)DCR. This will be explored fully in my forthcoming *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality* (and see also the postscript to this chapter).

Section 4: Development of the Theory of the Ground-state and the Cosmic Envelope Through 2E–5A

Before I begin the brief recapitulation of the moments of the system of (T)DCR through 2E–5A, I just want to accentuate a feature of the principle which I referred to in the previous section as the primacy of self-referentiality. Fundamental to human communication, to all processes of knowledge, understanding and creativity, including both the creativity manifest in learning from others and the creativity manifest in processes of discovery, is the phenomenon of 'eureka'—'I get it!', 'now I see it!' etc. If one takes a simple gestalt, or better a gestalt which can be seen in two ways, such as Wittgenstein's famous duck-rabbit, there comes a precise moment, if one is ever able to do so, in which one sees the duck as a rabbit; in the same way there comes a precise moment, more or less, when a logic student understands modus ponens or when a mathematics student understands the solution of a problem, or when a person succeeds or begins to succeed in making himself understood in a different language; or when someone knows how to reverse a car. No-one else can get it for you—nor can the practice or discipline itself, any more than a teacher, force you to get it. You have to get it for yourself, or you will never get it at all.[29] The condition of course of your getting it is that you already have it. This is the moment of Platonic anamnesis, it is already there implicitly, enfolded, encoded, as a possibility of manifesting in your consciousness. Of course it is not explicit, it is only implicit; but nevertheless it is still there—and discovery, or understanding is a process in which the implicit is evoked from outside, some external stimulus, situation or teacher. This is the external heteronomous stimulus, the *rajassic* component in knowledge

[29] Actually it is exactly the same in the case of freedom - no one else can make you free. Of course a good teacher can help you to understand it, and a comrade or friend or counsellor can facilitate your self-liberation.

or understanding.[30] Be that as it may, 'I see it', 'I hear it', 'I understand it', 'I do it' are basic and irreducible. Non-dual states and non-dual action are states which, when they exist or happen, are not done through anything else, but are just done. The primacy of non-duality is manifest at the levels of consciousness, being and agency, as I have already explained. As for the moment of Platonic anamnesis we have already seen through the theorem of co-presence that every other object is enfolded within each object, which is why the primacy of self-referentiality is not only consistent with but actually entails a commitment to a eudemonistic society.

I now turn to 2E of negativity. It is not necessary to rehearse all the moments of this dimension of DCR. Suffice it to say that absence is primary in every way to presence, and an essential feature of all change, from emergence to processes of transformation. Failure to understand the necessity for absence and negating concepts has been rationalised by the doctrine of ontological monovalence, the idea that being could be purely positive. But no purely positive being is possible, since it would lack all determinancy and shape. A totally positive world is inconceivable; but nothing, the absence of anything at all, is not. More to the point, what DCR stresses is the notion of determinate absence. Philosophers have talked about nothing, but what DCR is concerned with are those determinate absences, such as are manifest in hunger, homelessness, hope which drive the actual dialectic of human activity. So 2E is concerned with isolating the rational kernel of the dialectic as a learning process initiated, powered and resolved by negativity in the form of absence. The key moment here is of course the moment of transcendence, that is the move to a greater totality which resolves a contradiction that existed, by remedying the incompleteness that generated it. In this process of transcendence (in the relative sense) to a greater totality, transcendence (in the absolute sense) plays the key role. This

[30] The *sattvic* component is the Platonic one, the *tamasic* component or the inertia is counted or measured by the resistance you experience in your consciousness to the understanding implicit within you.

is the moment in which the new totalising concept emerges out of the blue, from nowhere, or so it seems—the moment in which the new concept slips between thoughts, from beyond thought (the ground-state location of supra-mental consciousness). But this moment of transcendence, which is the key to scientific discovery, is always the irruption of a transcendent cause on to an immanently well-prepared ground; and the transcendence, from the epistemically un-manifest is not necessarily ontologically non-immanent. Thus we can begin to make sense of the way in which Newton (and Newton more or less alone) discovered the phenomenon of gravity. He so saturated himself in the domain that he was studying that in a moment of sudden inspiration, when at rest, he achieved transcendental identification with the alethic truth of the phenomenon he was searching for. This is admittedly only a conjecture on my part. But one might like to dwell on Leonardo's remarkable drawings of flight, or the anticipations of phenomena, such as atomic structure, in ancient texts (such as the Vedas). To turn now from transcendence and the critique of subject–object duality, entailing the critique of the standard semiotic triangle, establishing the meaningful or significant as well as non-dual character of being (that is the way in which everything in the universe is enfolded within every other thing). I move on now to the critique of the other duality that is involved in the subject–predicate form, and here we are concerned, among other things, with the dialectical critique of analytical reasoning.

Science, like everything else, is a process in motion—the only kind of consistency one finds in science is a developmental consistency, similar to a consistency nature shows when an acorn develops into an oak; it is never a consistency of the formal, logical or mathematical type—or at least almost never. This kind of consistency only applies when scientists, having stretched, teased and pulled their concepts to mesh them together into an appropriate and completely novel cluster, have achieved some kind of picture or understanding of a new, deeper or wider level or aspect of reality. During this process meanings are continually in flux. In fact were meanings to remain stable then nothing new could have been discovered

for the new level of reality would have been implicit in the old, and induction or deduction would have sufficed for transcendence. But this is precisely what is impossible. The moment of formal logic comes at what I have called the Liebnitzian hour that is when a scientist writes up a discovery in a research paper or report and makes out that everything follows consistently (as if it were discovered in this way) from a set of premises. Of course as soon as this research report or result is accepted and acknowledged then the scientist moves on to discover the reasons why that result is as it is and then, using his creative imagination, he will have to apply metaphor, analogy, pictorial thought, semi-poetic intuition to get a glimpse which will afford him some kind of understanding, in terms based on or in some way derivative from his pre-existing conceptual field, as to why it is that nature behaves at this new and deeper or wider level of reality in the way that he discovered it to have done.

At this point I would just like to say something about the dominance within our culture of symbolic logical thought. It is known that this is typically associated with the left hemisphere of the brain and that the left-brain is that which is concerned with intellectual as distinct from intuitive processes. But it is not the case that language, discourse or even the intellect is 'left-brain'. When one knows one's way around a neighbourhood, our discursive or mental activity is quite inappropriate—one still discriminates, one still is using the intellect, but the intellect flows immediately and spontaneously from the knowledge which one has made a part of one's being. This paradigm of knowledge is a paradigm of absence of mental thought or effort and something that we find very difficult to comprehend. Yet think: how do you know what your friend has asked you to do, so easily, so spontaneously, so immediately?... All I have space to do here is make a series of distinctions which are often confused:

(1) left versus right hemisphere of the brain;
(2) male versus female capacities; and/or
(2*) men versus women;
(3) discursive versus intuitive intellect;

(4) analytical versus dialectical (and totalising) reasoning and thought
(5) sentential versus iconic (pictorial) thought
(6) instrumental (conditional)/manipulative/calculative versus unconditional/spontaneous/free or effortless reasoning and action
(7) attached versus unattached activity and relations
(8) an ethic of rules or maxims versus an ethic of virtues
(9) dualistic versus non-dualistic activity.

Of course there are overlaps and connections between these sets of distinctions, but there are distinctions within them as well. There are other familiar contrasts such as between linear, or successive, and holistic or simultaneous thinking, between digital and analogical procedures; between analytical and synthetic, or between divergent, oppositional and convergent thought; or between fixed or algorithmic and fuzzy, shifting, processual and open-ended procedures. Just listing these distinctions should be enough to make one pause before one aligns science or any other comparable activity along one mechanical set of these divides, such as that defined by formal symbolic logical or algorithmic thinking.[41]

I turn now briefly to 3L of totality. Here we are concerned with the concepts of holistic causality, universality, objectivity, etc. The philosophy of co-presence is obviously committed immediately to understanding things as being in internal relations with other things, not just externally 'related'. Indeed it is difficult to make sense of the idea of a relationship between two things which are external—what does this mean? Relating is always some kind of internal activity and at the point at which it is fixed or stabilised, even for a moment, then one is talking about identification, or equation—two separate things are becoming one; or two separate things reciprocate each other. In fact it is difficult to give any kind of meaning to the idea of a relation which does not involve some form of

[41] cf my 'Left versus Right-Brain: Creativity and Human Emancipation', *From Science to Emancipation*, forthcoming from Sage.

transcendental identification or non duality. How can two things be related unless at some point they are or become one?

DCR is sympathetic to the impulse of post-modernism in its critique of abstract analytical universality. This kind of universality, expressed in the Humean theory of causal laws or the Kantian categorial imperative, is a manifestation of the logic of commodification (intrinsic to capitalism) and the reification and alienation which it produces in an increasingly globalised way, and which was mimetically reproduced (or imitated) in the practice of the actually existing socialist states, which merely displaced the structures of reification, conditionality, instrumental reasoning, and master–slave relations from one set of persons and one kind of criteria on to another.[32] Nowhere in the world is there an empirical or actual universal generalisation which is true. No-one could possibly be said to be virtuous if they only ever acted according to the same maxim. If I never told (or was willing to tell) a white lie or spoke a harsh truth (and how are these two positions compatible with Kantian theory anyway?) then clearly I would be a vicious rather than a virtuous character. What would it mean to believe that all objects in the world had to fall under some uniformity? What would it mean to suppose that all pens had to be of the same type? What kind of social order does this remind you of?

Post-modernism and the new social movements, like slightly later the new fundamentalisms and communalisms, were reacting to the logic of western domination in the name of capitalist globalisation.[33] What those opposed to actualist universality

[32] No more were the immediate producers in control of the labour process under actually existing socialism than they were under capitalism. This was actually ironically the undoing of those social formations, for capitalism had a paid class of inventors to keep technological innovation going; and while state socialism was very good at copying pre-existing innovations (without the irrationalities of the capitalist market) there was no source of innovation intrinsic to the system itself.

[33] In fact this phenomenon is easy to exaggerate, on the very logic that it encourages, as it is to minimise. Thus far more Tandoori is consumed in England than Kentucky Fries in India.

have done is to jettison universality rather than actualism! Instead what we need are the couple of dialectical universality, which respects the mediations, geo-historical differentiations and uniquenesses of every particular thing or event and the concept of concrete singularity, which is the form in which universality is always and everywhere instantiated.

Finally I turn to the 4D realm of transformative praxis which it would be convenient to couple with 5A, by discussing this only under the aspect of reflexivity or the unity of theory and practice. I first want to state four theorems about agency:

(1) the irreducibility of intentionality
(2) the irreducibility of agency
(3) the spontaneity of agency
(4) the four-planar character of agency

1. Nothing which was an event or was happening to a human being or which stemmed from such an event or happening and occurred in the world could be said to be an action unless it was intentional. We are only in the realm of human agency, as distinct from instinctual or mechanistic behaviour, when ideas charged with emotions and prompted by our volition or will generate, that is actually produce, enact (paradigmatically, but not only) a change in material world. If I say to you 'please raise your right arm' and you do so, then I am a causal agent in your activity, i.e. through my speech action I have given you a reason to do something which you would not have done otherwise; and as a result of that the physical world is different from what it would otherwise have been. Patently the reason and the effect belong to the same network of causes; and there is no way in which we can avoid reference to intentionality, reason, consciousness, or ideas, any more than we can feelings, in the genesis of human actions.

2. Agency is equally irreducible. There is no way one cannot act. This is the force of the axiological imperative—to inact is perfectly proper, but what it means is to choose, that is to act so as to abstain from action at a particular determinate level of activity. Thus not to speak, to remain silent, is a very

important action. Behind the idea that action is optional is the fantasy of the 'beautiful soul' (in Hegelian terminology); this is of course precisely the standpoint not only of the monastery, but typically the intellectual and the academy. All this does is to deny responsibility (by a fanciful de-totalising flight) for one's involvement (a parasitism) in the activity which is anyway occurring, and on which one depends (and so exploits).

Before turning to 3, I want to look at 4.

4. The dimensions of four-planar social being have already been discussed. What is important to stress here is that the social structure, although irreducible to human action, is sustained, reproduced and transformed only in virtue of our conscious intentional human activity. Thus the social structure is not something which is 'out there' but is in here, something which inheres in our, and in virtue of, our daily activity and life—we internalise it, carry it and in so doing reproduce it in what Bourdieu has nicely called the 'habitus' of human life. Understanding this immediately gives us a way of seeing how, by transforming ourselves, we can cut off the supply lines to social structures which depend on us. This does not mean that we will be overthrowing them, but rather that we will be silently denying them our sustenance, to the extent that it is possible; so that to the extent that we are, and must be, in the system, we are not of the system. Actually this, as I shall shortly show, is not only an effective, but it is logically the only way in which social change can occur.

3. At some level agency must be spontaneous. At some point we cannot do something by doing something else or by thinking about doing it; at some point we just do it. In this way Aristotle was right: the conclusion of a practical synergism is an action. What follows from the necessary spontaneity involved in any action is very important. So let me go into some detail here. The only point at which we can act on the world is the point of our own embodied agency. We cannot transform the world by acting anywhere else, because we cannot act anywhere other than where we are. All action is necessarily action undertaken by selves. The greater the depth from which they act and the greater the unity with which they act

the more successful their collective action will be. Nevertheless it is an important truism that we can only act ourselves. We cannot act through someone else, though of course we can act in co-operation with someone else, and such solidarity and support is a necessary condition for any social life. For to be is precisely to be related: it is never to be a monad, alone, disconnected. If one aspires to transform social being, as one is logically obliged to do from the standpoint of the philosophy of co-presence, in which everyone's freedom and well being is enfolded and therefore contained within oneself, then one will seek to act from the deepest possible standpoint, that standpoint which has the widest possible reach. This will be the standpoint based on the elimination of the heteronomous and fixated elements within one's own embodied personality; and this will be or take the form of a spiritual revolution. This self-transformation will be coupled of necessity with engaged practical transformative activity in the world. Because one will be driven by the necessity to act from the standpoint of a realised being so as to maximise the possibility of the self-realisation of all other beings in the universe; and therefore one will of necessity be engaged in practical transformative projects. Deep spirituality implies a commitment to radical and universal emancipation. So individual self-realisation is the only route to universal self-realisation; but individual self-realisation without a commitment to universal self-realisation is a misnomer and in fact incoherent, if not indeed logically impossible. This transforms our understanding of both politics and religion.

The criteria for successful action are really quite simple. They amount to single-pointedness or clarity based on clarity, coherence or purity in mental, emotional and physical being and hence activity. In general the greater degree of depth from which the action stems, that is the closer to our ground-state (and hence the cosmic envelope) from which it issues, the greater will be the coherence of the result. This is the manifestation of the theorem that inner submissiveness is reflected in outer responsiveness. But how does this principle of clarity or single-pointedness work out in practice? Do we have a subjective

criterion which will enable us to know when we have achieved it? The answer is: yes. The absence of dissonance, strain or a feeling of being ill-at-ease suggests that things are alright. If we have such feelings as dissonance or unease then this is a prima facie indication that something is wrong. Of course what is wrong may not be an objective feature of the situation. It may just be that one misperceives or misunderstands the real objective situation. But such misunderstanding will interfere in any case with the mobilisation of one's intelligence and energy in achieving the intended result. So if there is such a feeling, then one knows straight away that one has to do something about it or action will fail to be right, or at least maximally coherent, and one's intentionality will be in some manner split or unfulfilled.

Of course when the discipline or practice in which the agent is engaged is one which he or she has succeeded in mastering, and in particular if it is one which is in his or her dharma, then the action will not only be without strain but both spontaneous and effortless. So ideally action should be direct and immediate: and we have seen that there are two paradigms for this—mindfulness and mindlessness: mindfulness when attention is necessary because the activity does not (yet) flow from one's innermost being or something consistent with it, and mindlessness when the action flows so normally and spontaneously from one's essential nature or something consistent with it, when one is so totally absorbed that nothing passes through one's mind, not even thoughts. In this way innocence - in the sense of lack of an interfering or distracting content[34] – is the key to successful action.

Further, important criteria for successful action consist, as we saw, in the integrity or unity of mind, emotion and body, reposing in or close to the ground-state. We noticed earlier how emotion had been the suppressed term in philosophical discourse, squeezed out by mind–body dualism. And it was of course our emotional life, and in particular the way in which factual statements could underwrite values and other affective

[34] Innocence = in no sense (i.e. not engaged in or on any of the senses).

attitudes, that the theory of explanatory critique was designed to justify; for we saw that the split between fact and value, science and politics/ethics/ways of living was a fundamental feature of western thought, de-totalising it or splitting it in two, in such a way that neither could values be justified, nor could values influence in any way the world of matters of fact and affairs. This encouraged not only a subjective but also an irresponsible attitude to the world. Emotions are so important because they link thought to action; without emotion the element of vitality or animation would be lost. And we have seen that the basic animating force in at least human life is love—albeit love normally mixed with some other emotion or motive; and albeit love expressed in a variety of different forms—e.g. solidarity, compassion, care, but also as truth, courage and commitment.

Finally we must note that action will be more intelligent and energised the closer we are in our being when the action is performed to our ground-state; the shorter the derivation from the cosmic envelope, the more direct the lineage or chain connecting the point of agency to the cosmic envelope. For we have seen that falsity, evil, heteronomy or superficiality is always parasitic on truth, good, freedom or depth. Of course this does not mean that such things as evil or oppression are impossible. Where do they come from then? Free will is certainly an answer; but more basically we can situate such phenomena as stemming from forked chains deriving their source of energy as complex TINA formations, sitting as parasites on the ground-states of beings, from which they derive ultimately all their energy and force. We have also seen, in investigating the asymmetry of axiology, that however powerful such features as oppressive social structures may appear to be they are ultimately unilaterally dependent on qualities deriving from the ground-states of beings located on the cosmic envelope, and as such cannot persist without that dependency. What characterises our situation today is that the time of this 'unilateral dependency' is running out. The social forms in which humanity are currently engaged are destroying the form of its physical habitat, our environment and organic embodiment

(where our physical existence is, on synchronic emergent powers materialism, clearly a necessary condition for the survival of our species). So it is not just the flourishing, but the very survival, of our species which is at stake now as our planetary host and its ecosystem is recoiling from the instrumentalist/manipulative and uncaring way in which we have treated it.

One further point before we come to consider the context of 're-enchantment'. We have seen that for any action we need all the following constituents:

Will—cf 1M;
Thought—cf 2E;
Feeling—cf 3L; and
Physical Action—cf 4D; which is either
Fulfilled (or not) —cf 5A

Action therefore has a five-fold character, and without any of these elements it is incomplete. Note that action always has some effect on the physical world (or on being generally), whether or not our intentionality is fulfilled, that is, whether or not the resulting state of affairs reflects what we intended. This is because action always makes a difference to what would otherwise have been the case. If it did not make a difference, then we could not be said to act at all.

Finally let me just resume some of the ways in which the complete re-totalisation of the terrain by the philosophy of Meta-Reality makes possible new syntheses of self-realisation. Thus the first synthesis is the consistency of the theorem of primacy of self-referentiality, that is, the principle of the hermetic tradition, and at the same time, commitment to the eudemonistic society. If the point of action is defined ultimately by the separateness of our embodied personalities, the commitment to the eudemonistic society follows from that inseparability between us which we possess in virtue of being bound together in our ground-states by the cosmic envelope. A second synthesis of self-realisation turns on understanding the consistency and mutual entailment of deep spirituality and commitment to secular projects of emancipation. A third synthesis turns on the understanding that on the one hand there

is no incompatibility between unlimitlessness and the constraints of physical embodiment: we can be infinite in a finite and bounded world. At the same time our infinity can itself be expressed in an infinite number of ways. Hence there is no inconsistency but rather mutual entailment in our dialectical universality and our concrete singularity.

Section 5: On the Re-enchantment of Reality in the Context of the Critique of the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity

We have seen how the philosophical discourse of modernity replaced the philosophical discourse of religion. The philosophical discourse of critical realism replaces the philosophical discourse of modernity. The philosophical discourse of a re-enchanted reality, entailed by the new philosophy of Meta-Reality, replaces the philosophical discourse of modernity in the last phase of which, the philosophical discourse of renascent fundamentalism, including the philosophical discourse of religious fundamentalism, provides that false absolute which limits and suppresses the powers of human creativity, love and intelligent knowledgeability, manifest in right-action.

In the first section of this chapter I noted that it was convenient to classify the philosophical discourse of modernity (PDM) into five phases; and that these five phases corresponded to and mapped very neatly onto the five layers of articulation of the system of TDCR and the five moments of its diachronic development from TR to TDCR. Therefore it will be convenient to use the same grid to look at the way in which the critique of these five phases of PDM makes possible an ever-increasing re-enchantment of reality. Of course it does not matter that these terms were not used in these phases, because this aspect of re-enchantment is the ontological contribution of the philosophy of Meta-Reality with its emphases on transcendence, that is, the collapse of subject-object duality (and hence the semiotic-triangle) coupled with the breakdown

of other characteristic dualities of philosophical thought, such as the fact–value duality and the subject–predicate duality, which immediately makes being and action transcendental, meaningful, valuable and essentially in process; together with the ontological categories of a ground-state and a cosmic envelope ingredient in the emergent world from which less basic, including heteronomous, oppressive, false and evil levels of being are derivative and on which they are parasitic. Ultimately in the world we are describing, indeed through the theorem of the ubiquity of co-presence, everything is implicit in everything else, so there is an extraordinary universalised synchronicity to this re-enchanted world that the philosophy of Meta-Reality is, for the first time, describing.[25]

(1) The classical discourse of modernity (CDM) is critiqued by 1M–ontology (initiated by of course TR). What steps are taken in the direction of re-enchantment here? First, the world is mysterious; that is to say it is structured, revealing layers of depth not immediately apparent to ordinary sense experience, or, at any one moment in time, contemporary science. Then the world is variegated: that is to say it is differentiated, and in fact never anywhere exactly the same: we could say it is both unique and special. And the world is one in which novelty and emergence are irreducible features: that is, the world is structured, differentiated and changing—these are the fundamental constitutive theorems of TR. Of course we know that the actual paradigms employed in CDM are themselves disavowed in contemporary science, but the atomism, actualism (or even blockism) and Cartesian paradigm

[25] Of course, the theme of re-enchantment may and indeed does find expression to an extent in our culture generally; this is just as one should expect. For the philosophy of Meta-Reality is not re-enchanting the world. The world is already enchanted, it is critiquing those philosophies and systems of thought and ways of living and being which disenchant it. This is not to underwrite every claim made for re-enchantment. The basic theorem of TR that ontological realism is consistent with and entails epistemological relativism which is consistent with and entails judgemental rationalism is valid here too, so a phenomenon such as re-enchantment can be occurring in our social world in a way which one can nevertheless still be critical of.

of action, that is punctualist (external) action by contiguous contact, was in fact philosophically impossible.* Thus the true philosophical import of quantum mechanics is to question notions of 'thing', 'event', etc. and to begin to see being in terms of successions over time, including the flaring and fuming of being into and out of existence, and distributions over space-time in which the distribution has to be seen as a totality (including in principle human agents who are after all material beings constituted by the very same substructure as that with which they perceive and interact). In the same way biology and ecological sciences make it clear that the true unit of biological evolution (and what we must begin to understand) is not the isolated organism, but the evolving species in its eco-niche, habitat, environment or *Umwelt*.

Turning to the social sphere, the individualism, voluntarism/reification, mind/body dualism, reason/cause dichotomy, etc. of the CDM must be totally rejected; and in its place we have conception of four-planar social being, so that every social event or phenomenon must be understood in terms of at least four dimensions:

[a] our material transactions with nature;
[b] our social interactions with others;
[c] social structure; and
[d] the stratification of our embodied personalities, rooted, I have argued, in terms of our ground-states.

This conception of four-planar social being enables us, together with the conception of all being as structured, differentiated and changing, to critique the egocentricity and the false, abstract, actualist universality of CDM.

(2) The second phase of high-modernism is the phase which can be best critiqued in terms of the categories 2E—negativity—and more generally CN although obviously these levels of criticism will intersect and overlap. High-modernism generates, positively, the notion of ideology-critique and sees how

* Cf *A Realist Theory of Science*, Chapter 2, passim.

thought can mystify being. Unfortunately it has very little awareness of the enormous creative power of thought, so that it tends always to some reductionist materialism in which the role of intentionality, consciousness and thought in agency is tendentially undermined or even completely lost. But consider any item of technology, any human artefact: what are such things but the objectifications of our thought. It might be argued that they are purely material beings, but if they are products of human being, then, unless they are unintentional, unconscious or mechanistic/instinctual manifestations of human beings, they are the products of our intentionality; and behaviour which was not intentional could not be said to be agency at all. Marx noticed this very well when he said that the two defining characteristics of human beings were their freedom from instinctual determination and their freedom to act in a planned and premeditated way. Unfortunately very few Marxists have taken Marx seriously; and the empty unthinking affirmations of materialism make it impossible to sustain the causal efficacy of technology, Marxism or their own ideational (linguistic, intentional) agency. Thought then is a defining, essential, creative power in the human world.

But there is direct as well as indirect causation in progress when two social agents interact in a meaningful way. If I understand what you say then I read or understand you directly. I do not interpret the sounds which I hear first and then make out their meaning. There is no separation between the hearing and the understanding or the reading of meaning, and this suggests that mind-to-mind causation or interaction is in fact primary; and physical mediation through the products of mental activity manifest in the world is in fact the secondary case. Thus telepathy falls into the primary paradigm, but of course normally the immediate reading of a mind by another mind is not at a telepathic distance—when we receive a letter from someone in Australia then of course the letter is a document which we see and interpret, and it makes sense to assimilate this to the indirect paradigm.

However, even the very reading of the words involves immediate understanding. There is in our social actions the

irreducible phenomenon of 'I see it'. This is transcendental identification in consciousness, and without it no social interaction or communication is possible. There is no space, gap or duality involved here. We are touching here on two features which the philosophy of Meta-Reality reflects under the ideas of the primacy of subjective or self-referentiality. First the hermetic standpoint—the irreducibility of 'I see it!' which we have seen, through the theory of co-presence, to entail a commitment to the eudemonistic society. Second, the critique of subject-object duality in the generalised notion of transcendence as ubiquitous to all social interaction and all human agency, as if it is an essential condition for any human consciousness at all. The ubiquity of transcendence entails equally the collapse of the semiotic triangle, being becomes immediately meaningful. But have we ever really thought otherwise? Have people ever ceased to look to the sky (and do they not look now to satellite pictures) for an indication of the weather? Have they ever stopped looking at faces or gestures as expressions or signs of the human responses they elicit? What would the world be like if it were not meaningful? In the same way the critique of the fact/value dichotomy only puts values back where they always were, in the world. When we see a child crying we immediately know the child is expressing unhappiness. The unhappiness is not something we impute to or impose on the child; the unhappiness is in the child himself. There are no dualities here. Quickly following on from the collapse of the subject–object duality is the collapse of the subject–predicate form. Why is it assumed in philosophy that change always occurs in the predicate, that is that there is no change intrinsic to or essential to the being of things, that change is always external and accidental? Of course the meaning of this is clear, that nothing ever essentially changes, that life and people and their conditions are fixed (stuck). But of course there is an internal contradiction within this way of thinking. Because what is it external that changes? Is that not a being too?

The critique of that part of PDM which we are associating with high-modernism enables us to see that being is immediately valuable, meaningful or significant and processually

changing. Thus our feelings, our emotional nature, our effective sensibilities; our thoughts and language; and our physical or other action responses are primed for engagement, activity, response to the world. We are involved as totalities in a world which is enchanted in the sense that it is the bearer of values, of meaning and change. This level of critique also enables us to see that the world consists of emergent totalities, in which deeper levels of being are ingredient in higher order levels which may mask, screen and altogether dominate them. These notions also enable us to see that the lower order level must be explicit and ingredient in the higher order level (even when it is masked), while the higher order emergent level is implicitly contained, that is, enfolded or encoded within the lower order level.

(3) The next phase of PDM, the ideology of modernisation, is best critiqued by 3L—totality. At this level we see one aspect of being reflecting into and being intra-active with others so as to form totalities, sub-totalities and sub-totalities within totalities; combining this with the co-ordinates for critiquing PDM that we have already established we come to see the world as a configurationally, perspectivally shifting ensemble, in which any entity or aspect of being is always reflecting something different to us and (for all we can say) to itself. Combining this level of critique, a deepening of our understanding of enchantment with the understanding already achieved from the critique of HM we have the ideas of heterocosmic (including micro- and macro-cosmic) exemplification; multiple instantiation; amplification or its converse (that is reinforcement or dampening); reversal (inversion, etc.). All this presages a much more general synchronicity than established at (2). When we combine this with the multiplicity and plurality of causes and effects characteristic of a structured, differentiated and changing world (cf 1) and put it in the context of four-planar social being, then we need to n-dimensionally generalise four-planar social being, so as to include at least mental and emotional (that is ideational and emotivational or affective) correlates to these dimensions as physically understood. When we come to appreciate that what we are dealing with here in this re-enchanted world is a world of meanings

and values, then we must situate, through the generalisation of concepts such as polysemy,[37] a generalised hermeneutics or way of reading/seeing and semiotics or way of producing and communicating meaning (value and tendential or orientational indication) in the world; and this will employ such figures which the specialist disciplines of perception, meaning, etc., have investigated, such as condensation and displacement.

(4) The critique of post-modernism involves accepting the emphasis on uniqueness and differentiation without throwing out our concepts of universality and connection. Indeed the ground-state and the cosmic envelope are just precisely the concepts we need to understand differentiation within a unity. But these aspects of being, on which all other aspects ultimately depend, are precisely those which, through the generalised theory of co-presence, allows us to see that everything is implicitly enfolded or contained and may be brought to consciousness, implicit or explicit, in everything else, so that anything can be traced or manifest in anything else. The world becomes one in which a quasi-magical or generalised (dialectically universalised) synchronicity is potentially capable of being manifest anywhere. In Section 3 I have already given an indication of the mechanism by the means of which karma operates; so we are not talking about a random 'butterfly effect' in a world of chaos. Rather we are talking about an internal relation within a being caused by its action on something else. Thus patently the karma of humanity's action on nature is that which it is suffering now: the cause is only to the most superficial understanding an external, accidental predication of humanity's: at any level of depth it is an action which humanity has caused to itself, since humanity is physically embodied and implanted on that which it has been spoiling. This conception of generalised synchronicity is not susceptible to manipulative exploitation (at least without a

[37] This indicates in the first instance the condensation of many meanings in a single sign—the semiotic counterpart of the conjunctural (or compound) nature, i.e. open systemic character, of events and things in the world.

karmic consequence). In general the greater the depth, that is the less heteronomous and forked or deviant elements or determinations within the being whose activity we are concerned with, that is, the clearer, purer and deeper the action springs from, the more efficacious it will be.[38]

(5) The critique of the neo-imperialism, the new triumphalism and the new religious fundamentalism turns on 5A. What these movements seek is a false absolute. Let us first be clear about the sense in which the philosophy of Meta-Reality is using the concept of a true or pure absolute. Its claim here is that the ground-state of human beings is characterised spontaneously and immediately by creativity, love, right-action, etc. for any human existence to be possible. And these qualities are shown in any form of action, even heinous and oppressive forms.[39] The absolute involved here is just precisely the way in which from the ground-state there will always be an infinite, unlimited or boundless number of ways of dealing with any situation consistently with the constraints of a physical, finite and limited world. This is a necessary theorem of logic.[40] More precisely, this absolute not only signifies an infinity of possibilities at the ground-state, it is itself open-ended—there is no implication that the ground-state is without depth, that its own potentialities cannot be increasingly

[38] Again this is not to deny the obvious existence of oppression, cruelty and other forms of evil, merely to pinpoint their aetiology, that from which they must of necessity derive their power – for they exist only in virtue of draining or dissipating energy and activity derived from the ground state.

[39] Just remember that nothing in the social world actually happens mechanistically. Everything, no matter how repetitive, involves creativity. Nothing is possible without some manifestation of that sense of sensitivity which we know as love; and no action is possible unless at some level, that level which I have called basic action, it is right, in the sense of appropriate for the task at hand. These are truly transcendental qualities necessary for any action at all, present in the worst as well as in the best actions and situations, though of course in the worst they are heavily outweighed by their opposites.

[40] Cf *A Realist Theory of Science*, p. 71.

revealed to the consciousness of the embodied personality rooted in it.

Secondly, the possibilities displayed at the ground-state, though infinite, are still unique to the location of that ground-state on the cosmic envelope, and therefore to the particular agent concerned; it is quite wrong to think that one infinity is the same as another – concrete singularity and dialectical universality apply in the realm of the transfinite, just as the previous point (stressing the open-endedness of the absolute) suggests that there are gradeable degrees of infinity. Moreover, particular locations on the cosmic envelope may share properties in common with some but not all locations, which does not undermine their universal connectivity or co-presence, but merely qualifies the way in which it is manifest on the cosmic envelope as a real feature of the universe.[41] Finally, this absolute is itself in motion, it has a definite geo-historical trajectory, it is evolving and developing.[42]

The process of self-realisation does not only not depend on magic or manipulation. In fact it is unachievable in those ways. The *sage*, unlike the *shaman*, is oriented to the free flourishing and self-realisation of all beings on the cosmic envelope indifferently, impersonally and absolutely (unconditionally), so does not play off or exploit one being against another; though she will recognise and be in sensitised solidarity to the virtues and development of all beings everywhere. The contrast with the new religious fundamentalism (and equally 'new age') could not be clearer. The sage is not only to be contrasted to the shaman, and the other doyennes of the philosophical discourse of religion, but to be contrasted with their

[41] These terms such as ground state and cosmic envelope are not to be taken as metaphors. They are the essential ultimate ingredients inherent in real entities, within this room, city, etc. Needed here is the idea of degrees or levels of co-presence, progressively awakened in consciousness; and of what is caused by my own or by someone else's intentionality or not caused in this way at all.

[42] This absolute at the ground state then shows all the characteristics of the concrete universal which I have argued elsewhere must be understood at the very minimum as a 'multiple quadruplicity'. cf DPF see Chapter 2 7 passim.

impoverished counterparts in the latest phase of PDM, in the new religious fundamentalism. Here there is only the merest hint of the ground-state, so that there is no vision, intuition, wisdom or rationality, very rarely are arguments or discursive considerations given for such a position. Any enchantment that there is takes the form of the celebration of rites and rituals. But even the celebration of rites and rituals is a very subordinate moment in such practices. Rather, what is involved is the observation of rules, that is the external conformity of agents to codes of conduct or laws heteronomously imposed on them or which they impose on themselves.

Implications for Generalised Hermeneutics and Semiotics

I now want to look at the enhanced conception of meaning implied by the possibility of seeing everything that happens as meaningful. Note that the meaning of the same phenomena may, and in general will, be different for every different agent, since both meanings and agents are unique (relationally defined) beings in the world. This does not make interpretation or communication impossible. Rather it indicates what we routinely and ordinarily do—as when we contextualise and so identify meaning when we are reading an article or book or having a conversation with a stranger, or for that matter a friend. We know the same words do not mean the same things in different contexts. Meaning is always a question of totality and context and what we are dealing with here is a generalised polysemy. These new or extended ways of reading, seeing, understanding the world and acting on it accordingly, e.g. in creative visualisation, employing all the co-ordinates of n-dimensionally social being, mean that we are talking about new ways of perceiving and new ways of acting. Enhanced perception means also enhanced action, and action in ways that we are all the while pursuing but have barely begun to exploit. These new ways of acting derive from new ways of

being. All this must be understood in terms of the way in which we have barely scratched the surface of the powers that we actually possess. It is well known that we use less than ten per cent of the capacity of our brains; but do we ever think how little we use our capacities to creatively visualise phenomena and situations? Certainly if we are artists or architects we may imagine a model in our mind before we begin to construct it. But why is it that we do not employ the tremendous powers of our thought, particularly when that thought is emotionally charged?[*3] Thus recognising that the mental and emotional aspects of our being explicitly contain the physical aspects too, think how one might begin to use the creative power of these levels. Imagine that one is afraid of a person or situation. Remember then that the fear, most fear, resides not in the actual situation, but in our subjective response to it; so let us try and operate on the fear itself. What would you do if you were afraid of something? You would armour-or protect yourself. So armour or protect yourself in your mind. Imagine when you next encounter that situation that you are cloaked in armour or otherwise shielded. This will have exactly the effect you need at the level that you need it. Or suppose you want to overcome an unpleasant episode in your life. When you want to leave a room, what do you do? You shut the door. So slam the door on that situation or episode in your mind. That is after all the only place where that situation or episode remains. It does not remain in the world any longer. In another context I will discuss systematic

[*3] This is the normal connotation of the concept of the *'astral'*. This concept, which has probably been abused, is much maligned. But we do not take umbrage at the idea of ideology as being practically charged consciousness; or the notion that supporters of a football team share something in common which differentiates them from supporters of other teams or other non-football supporters. It would be absurd for so many reasons to think that this was (merely) because of their behaviour. What we are then talking about is something like a common sensibility which explains differential behaviour and which has a real force or power which cannot be identified with its physical effects, any more than a gravitational or magnetic field can

techniques for using mental and emotional capacities in order to develop those powers that we already have but neglect to use.

I turn now to some implications of the generalised theory of co-presence:

On it, every object implicitly contains every other object.

Therefore any object may show significance and meaning (*a*) of [cf cause] or (*b*) for [cf effect] any other object.

And any object may show or indicate value[44] (*a*) of or (*b*) for any other object.

This is one aspect of 'heterocosmic amplification'.

In general in the enchanted world any part of being can signify or hold significance for any other part of being.

We have already seen in 2I? that creativity entailing through transcendence, a critique of subject–object duality also entails a critique of the semiotic triangle, so that being becomes immediately meaningful; and we have already seen (through the critique of the fact/value dichotomy) that being is also evaluative, i.e. of value, valuable.

The critique of subject–predicate duality also entails a critique of left-brain thought; and opens up the holistic, convergent, synthesising, binding, shaping, attracting powers of the right-brain. The closer proximity to feeling necessitated in this moment makes possible conceptions of attunement and attraction, entailing dialectically mutual expansion, in the five radiating circles of love – of self, of another human, of all humans, of all creation and of god. At this moment any expansion also entails self-expansion.

In relation to transformative agency, the degree of coherence depends on the absence or suspension of heteronomy; it is signified by the absence of dis-ease; and is characterised, through single-pointed (non-split), or the relative suspension (or absence) of unfulfilled, intentionality by inner emptiness

[44] Compare attractive force or propensity – cf 3I.– and the emotive or evaluative nature of feelings and value. Of course values and feelings may have a repulsive force or propensity, especially when directionally 'negative', as in the case of fear, which puts distance between the subject and the object, in contrast to love which brings them together.

(mindlessness—spontaneity) or mindfulness. The chief dynamic of the path to self-expansion is love, informing either transformative or translative spirituality; the elimination of negative incompleteness (the removal of heteronomy) leads on to the drive for fulfilment, entailing a commitment to a eudemonistic society, since freedom must be incomplete so long as any being, implicitly co-present or enfolded within me, is unfree—this drive to fulfilment, entailing a commitment to the eudemonistic society, does not mean the absence of 'leading edges', e.g. in the punctuated prefiguration discussed elsewhere provided by certain features of women's labour, but it does involve a critique of characteristic features of institutions and organisations in our reified, alienating society.

Reverting to the expanded ontology of the re-enchanted world, we note that higher-order levels explicitly contain lower levels ('what is below is above') and that higher-order levels are implicitly contained in lower-order ones ('what is above is below'). Action and perception become variables, as the creative (direct and indirect) power of thought can be seen to involve imaging/imagining/visualising. As for perception we must distinguish two cases—that is

(a) seeing more in a thing, at a given level of structure, and;
(b) seeing more <u>of</u> a thing, that is more aspects or levels of structure or dimensions of its being in n-dimensionally generalised social space.

This case of (*a*), like (*b*), however, also includes the possibility of seeing more objects, implicit, enfolded, or co-present within the thing, just as we can also see <u>in</u> that thing levels of higher-order structure, implicitly contained within the lower-order level. These two kinds of 'reading', though they involve distinct perceptual (or para-perceptual) capacities through the theorem of implicit/explicit containment, both allow access to greater dimensions of reality (including its geo-history and tendentionally present trajectory) as well as the enfoldment of greater reaches of being implicitly enfolded

within that thing (including its karmic relations with other things [which may include places, and the circumstances that give rise to the karma.]) The phenomenon of co-presence opens up therefore new and expanded 'ways of seeing', according to our expanded 'new' understanding of the dimensions, levels or 'ways of being' (and interacting/intra-acting of a thing). Thus we can see more things and more of a thing in a thing or event, both of which have to be understood as concretely universal (dialectically universalised/concretely singularised); the result is a configurationally meaningful and evaluative reading of a given 'thing' or event, as holistically packed or condensed, implicitly or explicitly containing, that is enfolded within it or present as part of it, increasingly deep and wide, extensive and intensive levels of meaningful and valuable (evaluative) aspects of reality. In principle then, on this way of looking at things, one could read the whole history of the universe by inspecting a pebble.

All these aspects of meaning/value therefore are aspects which can not only be interpreted or valued but immediately and directly, intuitively/holistically read or seen—*cf* the primacy and irreducibility of 'I see it!' in any act of understanding, learning or communicating. The transcendental identity in consciousness implied by the theory of the ground-state, transcendence and the cosmic envelope is therefore always implicitly the transcendental identity in any (and therefore in my) consciousness. The entities enfolded within being are of course not only or simply 'things', but consist in sets of relations, all sorts of connections and connectors, aspects, mediations and significations (so 'messages' /indicators/ 'signs'). All this is already implicit in everyday life in the dynamics of self-expansion, consequent upon the shedding of the ego and other aspects of heteronomy. This takes the form of increasing awareness, which becomes an increasing self-awareness, as one becomes increasingly sensitive to and aware of the zone connecting and constitutive of causes and effects. That is, as we expand our self-awareness, our awareness, increasingly rooted in the ground-state, expands to include not only the full array of causes and effects within the increasingly less

heteronomous embodied personality, but also to include all the elements and influences which will affect the success of the action. The more responsive (or submissive) we are to our ground-state or transcendentally real self, the more nature or the rest of the universe will be submissive (or responsive) to our intentionality, an intentionality expressing our dharma, our concretely singularised inner nature increasingly free of the attachments (including their negative form of aversions) which constrain it, that is of the cravings stemming from '*avadya*' or 'practical ignorance'.

Situating the development of critical realism and its own self-transcendence in the context of the development of five phases of the philosophical discourse of modernity, enables us to note an interesting resonance in the development of modernity. This is marked by its own exclusion of the non-modern, the other, the intrinsic exterior it tacitly presupposes (in a classic TINA formation)—a move which has been thematised by writers such as Edward Said specifically in terms of its construction of the category of the 'other' (most notably in his studies of 'orientalism')—that is, in terms of alterity, or precisely subject-object duality. Furthermore, decolonisation may itself be taken as emblematic or symbolic of the promise carried in struggles against all forms of oppression and chauvinism. Thus it both takes on a heterocosmic and macroscopic significance for emancipation as such and appears as a homologue and analogue of the very process of transcending subject-object duality, upon which emancipation depends. These struggles for recognition and other deeper forms of emancipation therefore presuppose transcendence in both its relative and absolute senses; and, at a social level, therefore, stand as interesting reflexes and duals of the main theme of this work, as well as forming the contextual background or backcloth to its own self-trajectory.

Indeed we can even take this further and explore such interesting analogies as the way in which capitalism, and in its globalising and universalising form extending the reign of money, itself must mirror and mimic precisely those processes of transcendental identification, albeit in an extremely low and vulgar way, which underpin all social interaction and processes.

Thus when two commodities exchange one has the immediate non-dual reflexive exchange of equivalents, presupposing their tacit transcendental (or quasi-transcendental) identification (at least in mystificatory consciousness). This exchange of course presupposes a non-quasi and real transcendental identification at a more basic or real human level—that is, it presupposes not only the trust and solidarity of the human beings who are the parties to, or underpin, or are the creative agents and vehicles of, the exchange; it also presupposes that, in that exchange, those human beings do indeed understand, and therefore share a moment of transcendental identification, with each other.

So upon reflection we can see that the phenomenon of transcendence is as essential to understanding our contemporary history as it is to making rational sense of the spiritual core or essence of the religious and other cultural traditions we have inherited from the past. In this way we bring together all diverse aspects of the contemporary scene, understanding in particular (through categorial realism) that philosophical theories (or their subject matter) are not something apart from the realities we in our ordinary or specialist activities engage, but rather, that they describe precisely those realities, including all their errors, evils and ills, in their most abstract or general characteristics.

In this way also we perspectivally re-totalise the field, which we all daily experience, and which is plummeting into global crisis, under the categories of transcendence, duality and non-duality, in the context of an expanded ontology, in which we not only, as in hitherto critical realism, think being, think being processually, and as a totality, and as incorporating transformative agency and reflexivity; but also now think being as multi-planar and n-dimensionally generalised, with mental and emotional sui generis realities, bound together within a more basic level which is not only beyond thought but beyond sight, which I have called the cosmic envelope; and within this vastly expanded conception of being, and the very extended ontology it necessitates, we now see being as re-enchanted, that is as valuable, meaningful and containing invisible, (more

generally unknown and even unmanifest), subtle, mysterious and even magical qualities and connections, which our contemporary sciences know nothing of.

This is the new world of re-enchanting reality – it is a world which I argue is presupposed in our daily life, to which we are all privy, which we routinely access, and which we can become conscious of, so expanding our sensibility, powers and awareness, even as we seek to achieve our aspirations, be they personal or social. We are all enchanted beings, all unlimited selves; to begin to become fully enchanted beings, to fully actualise or realise our unlimited selves, recognising what we essentially are and what is the essential nature of the world in which we live, becomes not only liberating in itself, but the first step on the road to becoming more fully, and only, what we essentially are and to releasing the powers of our own enchanted beings to maximise the realisation and enchantment of all beings everywhere.

Section 6: The Basic Features of Meta-Reality

The philosophy of Meta-Reality sees transcendence and non-duality as underpinning all human being and activity; and indeed implicitly all life. Whatever we are and do, we must access our ground-state located on the cosmic envelope, achieve transcendental identification in consciousness with others and perform non-dual transcendentally agentive or basic, spontaneous acts. In this way non-duality, and through the implication of the theorem that transcendental identification in consciousness entails also the possibility (and necessity in specific cases) of transcendental identification in my consciousness, non-duality and co-presence characterize all our acts and states of being. Indeed non-duality and co-presence are manifest everywhere. For co-presence signifies the sense in which the ground-states of all other beings located on the cosmic envelope are implicitly contained within my own, the sense in which the whole implicate order of the universe is contained within any aspect or

part of it, although which parts and aspects are unfolded or evolved or explicated or actualised in the world of becoming, of space-time, of materially embodied, animate and conscious beings is a contingent question, subject to the evolution and the circumstances of the life forms, implicitly conscious forms, in question.

Because the concept of **co-presence** is so important to this philosophy, we should not neglect the extraordinary significance of the phenomenon of transcendental identification. **Transcendental identification** is not only a necessary feature of all human interaction, it is something which is possible between any two distinct terms. So one way to understand the syntheses, which I have called the syntheses of self-realisation, is to see them as showing how apparent opposites (such as singularity and universality) can and do, moreover in a completely non-paradoxical way co-exist, that is are co-present, and co-present in all beings everywhere. Thus everything is at once concretely singularised and at the same time dialectically universalised. If the theory of co-presence establishes the truth of the old Vedic formula 'I am the totality', that is that the totality is implicit, enfolded within me, then the theory of transcendental identification shows how at a more immediate level any two physically, or in some other way, differentiable things, beings or terms can become one without losing their distinctness as individuals. In fact, we can only be an individual, we only become individuated, precisely insofar as we internalise and make part of our innermost being the experiences of our transcendental identifications with other beings. This is therefore not a Leibnizian monadology. Difference and non-identity is retained. Every being which is enfolded within me nevertheless remains distinct, has its own distinct objective reality apart from me. The world of embodiment, the world of material being remains intact. This is no idealism, in the sense that every being is merely a part of my subjectivity or consciousness; on the contrary, the condition of my own subjectivity or consciousness remains my capacity to engage and be moulded by the formative experiences, encounters (within which transcendental identification occurs)

of objects distinct and apart, physically, materially, and qualitatively, from me. My being indeed is constituted by the totality of my relationships, but these relationships, internal to me, are with beings who have a material, physical, emotional, mental (and as far as we know, other qualitative) existence apart from me.

Thus we have the constellational identity or unity of non-duality, e.g. at the level of our material embodiment, and duality; and the TINA formation is just a particular form of this more general figure of constellational unity or identity,[45] so if the key figure that the philosophy of co-presence pinpoints is the co-presence of the implicate or enfolded and the explicated or become, the key figure of transcendental identification is always between entities or beings which exist in a world already explicated, a world already manifest in the dualities of creation.

The extraordinary feature of this world of creation, this world bound by the cosmic envelope, which is the only world we know and the world in which we live (though it remains true that we can deduce the implicate order, the world of pure enfolded being, of pure potentiality from such phenomena, the world of Platonic anamnesis as its condition of possibility) is that it is a world in which everything is actually underpinned by non-duality and transcendence, i.e. that form of unity which depends on transcendental identification; and that any change in this world is always marked by emergence from absence, which is the explication of an implicit or enfolded potential. So this immediately provides a way in which we can see the significance of creativity or transcendental emergence presupposing the co-presence of being and absence, at the junction point of what in critical realist terms is the domain of 1M—or ontology and 2E—or negativity; and transcendental identification, at the junction point of 2E—negativity and 3L—totality; and transcendental agency at the junction point of the domain of 3L—totality and 4D—transformative praxis (the junction point precisely because such transcendental agency

[45] Already thematised in *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, Chapter 2.7 and passim.

springs spontaneously from the very being of the person involved). Each of these features, instancing forms of transcendence, transcendence as *emergence*, transcendence as *identification* and transcendence as *agency* (including transcendence as holistic or teamwork agency), are features without which the world of duality could not for a moment survive. Therefore we have the most remarkable kind of result, a result worth characterising by a new name, the name of the philosophy of Meta-Reality, because all the dualities which realism describes and situates and even seeks to transcend are ultimately unilaterally and entirely dependent on a non-duality which it not only cannot describe, but even denies.

This is why I have coined the term the philosophy of Meta-Reality; and what Meta-Reality means is the dependence and encompassing or englobing or constellational circumscribing of the world of duality by non-duality. And this non-duality is not something 'mystical', not something that depends on any kind of religious belief or faith, but the necessary condition for our most quotidian states and acts. This philosophy of Meta-Reality is indeed a form of spirituality but it is entirely within the bounds of secularism, consistent with any or no faiths. What the nature of the implicate order, the order of being, the order of the ground of the ground-state properties of will, creativity, love, right-action and fulfilled intentionality, corresponding to the moments of 1M-5A, is and these moments will be described in my forthcoming systematic exposition called *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality*. Here I will show how an entirely different kind of understanding of the world of duality, consistent with but deeper than that given by critical realism can be sustained. And we shall do so in a way in which we shall see how the philosophy of Meta-Reality, encompassing a vastly expanded ontology of a re-enchanted reality, replaces the philosophical discourse of modernity in all its phases, which has now replaced the traditional philosophical discourse of religion.

Our task is to re-become non-dual beings in a world of duality, opposition and strife. Freedom is the elimination of the dual components within my embodied personality; that is the elimination of everything inconsistent with my ground-state,

the cessation of negative incompleteness. In order to do this, I have to experience duality, heteronomy and change, to grow and fulfil my intentionality. When I have fulfilled my intentionality, when I have no more non-me within me, I am one with my ground-state, and one with the ground-states of all other beings in the rest of creation too. I am one with the whole of creation; and as such will reflect back to its creator his work, formation, creation, will or intentionality; and perfectly reflecting his intentionality, I am one with him too. This is self-realisation, the realisation of the divine ingredient within me. The very process whereby it is achieved is a mimetic reproduction of the very act of creation itself—for I must strive to externalise and fulfil my intentionality until it perfectly reflects back me to me. In becoming one with myself, I become one with the divine ingredient within me; and in becoming one with the divine ingredient within me I become one with divinity, and in becoming one with the divine ingredient within me or divinity I become one with the rest of the cosmos. For the divine ingredient within me is just what we have been calling my ground-state and the rest of the cosmos is what is bound by the cosmic envelope.

But this is not the end of the odyssey in the world of duality. I am still *positively incomplete*, insofar as other beings are co-present, enfolded within me, are negatively incomplete, that is, unfree. When the whole of creation is self-realised, when it reflects back its own divinity, then and only then will there be *peace*. Even then this peace is only the end of pre-history. I know in the meantime that I will grow and develop while I strive for this goal, a development to which I can see no conceivable end; so if there is an ever-expanding plenitude of possibilities packed into my non-dual being, my agentive self in the world of duality, we cannot even begin to anticipate what possibilities lie within eudemonia. This eudemonia is not something removed from ordinary secular speculation, so I have argued; rather, we have found it everywhere as a presupposition of even the most crude and rudimentary forms of ethics. What it suggests is that philosophical reflection necessitates the generalization of the qualities dimly apprehended

in the manifestations of our ground-states in the daily routines of our more or less unhappy lives. A dream sustains the world in which we live, without this dream nothing could ever be done, happen or be understood; all we have to do to realise this dream is eliminate from within ourselves everything that supports or sustains what occludes or dominates it, or is contrary to it. The only way we can do this is in fact the easiest way to do it—the royal road to emancipation is the route which minimises the dissipation of our energies and maximises the enjoyment of our natural and acquired powers.

Postscript*

(I) The main insight, and most important feature,of the philosophy of Meta-Reality is that every thing – from gnostic knowledge to the most accidental relation – depends upon identity and identification, whereas critical realism is a philosophy of non-identity. The identity elaborated in the philosophy of Meta-Reality is not opposed to differentiation and development; so that we have transcendental holism and process, as well as transcendental agency. Such identity and identification (for example, in transcendental identification in consciousness) is not simple, atomistic, characterless or punctiform. For a start it observes the principle of concrete singularity/dialectical universality. Secondly, to reiterate, it is consistent with differentiation and development; there is no incompatibility between non-duality and holism or process. Thus consider the way in which we achieve transcendental identification with a picture, or a piece of music or even the meaning of someone's sentence, each holistic phenomena – a process in time, in which the physical separateness of the beings is not abolished, but suspended. Similarly, transcendental agency is always holistic, complex and differentiated, even in the case of the most simple skills, as studies from Piaget on have shown. Then again transcendental emergence in creativity always takes the form of a gestalt, it is always a quantum leap to a new whole, even if the whole will subsequently be itself enormously expanded and developed..

* Chennai and London, February 2002.

This is very important for the question of how we can be non-dual beings in (*a*) a world of duality and (*b*) more generally, in a physically conditioned world, defined by basic features such as spatial separation, sequential time, physical parameters and laws of nature. We can be non-dual beings in such a world precisely insofar as we are able to view the parameters and constraints imposed by the physicality of our condition and our struggles in the world of oppositional duality as conditions for our action, rather than as constraints upon it, as opportunities rather than obstacles. Thus in our growth and development we in-build externally—and in this sense heteronomously—and so (not necessarily oppositionally) dualistically, acquired skills[45] into a field defined by our transcendentally real self, into which these newly acquired skills are recursively embedded, within an ever-expanding embodied personality, defined by the consistency of that embodied personality with our ground-state. In the world, as presently constituted, it is impossible to avoid oppositional duality, contradiction, conflict and strife, and so it is impossible to avoid oppositional dual action, as noted in the Postscript to Chapter 1. But even in a world which was truly the expression of eudemenia or theosis there would still be dualistic modes of activity, though there is no reason to suppose these would be oppositional, conflictual or contradictory. In either case the coherence of the ideal of the elimination of negative incompleteness, that is of self-realisation, through the shedding of all heteronomy in the embodied personality (and after that within the psychic being), of our becoming non-dual beings in a world of duality, remains intact. Indeed unless this was so, unless we were able to be, as non-dual beings, agents in a world of duality, there would be no hope for human emancipation.

(2) Consciousness, we have seen, is a synchronic, enfolded or implicit power or property of matter, diachronically evolved from it. Since consciousness, as is shown by direct mind-to-mind action or transcendental identification in consciousness, can certainly exist without matter, i.e. is irreducible to matter, we

[45] For these externally (and heteronomously) acquired skills, there is always an internal (and autonomous) condition of possibility—in Platonic anamnesis.

must also say that matter is a synchronically and potentially diachronically emergent power of consciousness, just as the converse is equally the case.

(3) Non-duality is a property of consciousness; reciprocity a property of animate being/vitality/life; co-presence is a principle or property of all being (including matter). Reciprocity in fact works via the principles of co-presence. Since what happens in the case of a reciprocation is that some aspect or part of the reciprocating being which is similar, attuned to or (one might say) on the same wavelength, frequency or level of vibration as that to which it reciprocates, resonates to the impulse which activates it. As the reciprocating being is itself a concrete universal, then the modes of resonance will depend on which feature of that particular concrete universal is involved.

There are two simple paradigms for cases of the awakening of elements co-present within a being. The first, and this is characteristic of that phase of the dialectic of liberation which I have associated with the shedding of heteronomous elements in the embodied personality or the psychic being which underlies it, depends on the activation of the intentionality of an agent. The second, characteristic of the phase which I have associated with the realisation, embodiment or flowering of the ground-state in the embodied personality which it informs, depends on the activation of the developing, unfolding (self– and –universal) awareness of the agent. These two phases are only logically, not chronologically, distinct; as stressed they normally proceed in tandem. In both cases it is the psychic being which typically mediates and links the levels of conscious transcendental identification and enfolded co-presence.

Thus the consequences of our own split or unfulfilled intentionality activate that aspect of being co-present within us which we have affected ourselves; so that we carry inside ourselves the external effects of our intentional acts. In the same kind of way, any action by an agent or a being with whom we are in relations of affinity or atunement[47] will tend

[47] This allows us to be grouped together or classified under some moment of our differential concrete universalities.

reciprocally to resonate, that is awaken or activate a chord or echo within ourselves, mediated by the presence of that aspect of being within ourselves.[28] Increasing self-awareness proceeds apace with increasing awareness of its universal cosmic context; and as I dig deeper, my capacity to illicit or unfold, present or make explicit to consciousness, the enfolded (co-present) being within me grows. So that as we approach or reach awareness of the transcendentally real self, the ground-state and its connection with the rest of the cosmos, bound together in the cosmic envelope, our capacity to access or intuit or act in accord with the ground-states of all other beings (implicit, co-present within, and explicitly or implicitly cognised by, us) grows and develops, resulting in increasing coherence of sensibility and action.

(4) There are at least three ways in which the principles of the philosophy of Meta-Reality, which I have been articulating in this book, can be established:

[1] ***Objectively,*** as an immanent critique and extension of the systematic attempt of critical realism to think being, by which route we arrive at the position that realism about transcendence and non-duality entails the self-transcendence of realism, conceived as involving centrally non-identity and duality. On this line, a realism of the ground-state, the cosmic envelope and transcendental identification in consciousness, more generally of transcendental consciousness, identification and agency shows how the world of non-duality underpins the dualities, alienations and contradictions, reifications and attachments of contemporary life.

[2] ***Subjectively,*** by a consideration of what must be the case for human intentionality to be realised. This is the pragmatic approach to the philosophy developed here—namely, how am I to achieve what I want in life? Essentially this will take the agent to a position in which she realises that coherence and clarity in intentionality (or volition), thought, feeling and

[28] The actual mediation may depend on some subtle or physically invisible connection that links resonating or attuned beings who are physically (spatio-temporally) separate in the material world.

action depends upon the shedding of heteronomous elements within her embodied personality, enabling access to the leverage point of maximally efficacious action, close to or at the person's ground-state. In this dynamic of self-expansion, the original goals of earthly success and fulfilment will have been refashioned in a much broader light, even though they may not be jettisoned. This dialectic may thus proceed from a standpoint of desire, attachment and instrumental rationality, and show how, for instance the dynamic of desire to freedom,[39] continues naturally into the dialectic to desirelessness, so that attachment, fixation and manipulation, conditionality, contract and constraint, exchange and exploitation transcend themselves in a state of desirelessness and spontaneous, unconditional, effortless (and joyous) activity, which is at once a prayer, offering or surrender to the divine, a gift to herself and the rest of being and a transformation (potentially at all four dimensions of four-planar social being).

[3] As the unity of these two approaches, namely in the study of what must be the case for there to be any being at all. Thus on this line, transcendence in the form of emergence, coherence or unity and agency can be shown to be necessary conditions of any being at all. On the second line, we are concerned with the properties of will, thought, feeling, objectification and fulfilment of intentionality; on this third line we show how the implicit potential (and unbound energy) of being at the ground-state, creativity, love, spontaneous right-action and fulfilment or reflection of the original impulse in being are implicit in anything at all. And these correspond of course to 1M–3A of ontology, negativity, totality, transformative praxis and reflexivity in the system of (transcendental) dialectical critical realism, so that it can be readily seen how the three approaches map into each other.

In this way we show how, through the critical understanding of the world of duality, the conditions for successful action or the realisation of our intentionality, and the transcendental

[39] I elaborated this dialectic in *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, Chapter 3, Section 20.

or necessary presuppositions for there to be any being at all, the three lines or approaches to the principles of Meta-Reality converge on the same result. In this book I have adopted only the first approach. In *The Philosophy of Meta-Reality*, my main emphasis will be on the third, starting with the necessary conditions for there to be anything at all. This will be seen to imply a foundation or an implicit potential, enfolded in absence, which emerges in the form of creativity, takes shape through the binding powers of love and expresses itself in action, until action completely fulfils the intentionality of the initial foundational impulse. In exploring the blocks on the realisation of intentionality we will inevitably be going over some of the same ground explored here, for the world of duality is precisely a world in which illusion and constraint dominate that on which they depend (and it is this world which critical realism has studied and critiqued).[20] In the same way in considering how intentionality articulated in thought and shaped by feeling manifests itself in the world more or less successfully, we will be exploring the overlap with the second, subjective or pragmatic approach, the approach from which it is reasonable to expect most agents to start.

(5) In considering the way in which the philosophy of Meta-Reality re-enchants reality we may conveniently take four principles of mind as our starting point:

(i) its irreducibility to matter and in agency;
(ii) its efficacy, its creative (and destructive) power;
(iii) its direct, as well as indirect, in mind-to-mind, unmediated action;
(iv) its spontaneity, in basic action including speech and thought, presupposing intuitive (and right-brain) and

[20] It is very important to the position articulated here that illusion and constraint are real. This differentiates it from many interpretative traditions, particularly from the East. In the same way, differentiation and singularity are real; as is process, change and development. So the unities and identifications on which these illusions, dualities and constraints depend are not simple but highly differentiated wholes.

> more especially supra-mental or transcendental consciousness, that is consciousness from or at the ground-state.

The next step involves seeing that non-duality (and generally the transcendental) entails critiques of the subject–object and subject–predicate dualisms, thus undermining at once realism as normally understood and the reifications of abstract thought. Carried through to its ultimate limits this entails, as we have seen, a very radical critique of our atomistic conceptions of identity and our abstract conceptions of universality, and makes possible a critique of Weberian conceptions of rationalisation and the 'iron cage' in which we are supposedly imprisoned; and of the de-divinisation of reality, the substitution of the profane for the sacred and the quantitative, uniform and mechanical for the qualitative, processual and organic. As already stressed, non-duality is consistent with differentiation and development; transcendental identity and identification is always a unity within and between holistic fields. All this re-spiritualises and re-divinises being. We begin to make sense of the ground-state qualities of transcendental emergence in the form of creativity, transcendental identification in the form of love and transcendental agency in the form of action. Concepts of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope enable us once more to see action as spontaneous, unconditional, effortless and joyous, and equally as coherent, maximally efficacious, place-timely, synchronicitous and so on.

Non-duality undermines the dualisms of the disenchanted world. Once the distinction between the sacred and the profane collapses, a re-valuation of reality quickly follows, facilitated by the breakdown of the fact–value dichotomy. But the most important effect of the reinstatement of the transcendental, and its reinstatement moreover as a foundational, infra-structural feature of all social life and indeed being as such, is the collapse of the subject–object and subject–predicate dualisms and the re-emergence of rich concepts of identity, process and totality. The collapse of the semiotic triangle, entailed by the collapse of subject object duality, means that reality

becomes meaningful; so that we can learn from being, and change, as beings, becoming at once richer, more completely what we essentially are, and lighter (less encumbered by heteronomy) and so more flexible, capable of responding more sensitively to a changing environment. Moreover, any aspect of reality may be a signifier and any signifier may reveal both a multiplicity of meanings encoded within it and a plurality of meanings for differential agents and contexts in the world. If the meaningful nature of reality establishes that we can learn from it, think and use it creatively, the evaluative nature of reality means that we always know how, that is what is the right (or the wrong) way to do so, so the significance in being is always evaluatively charged, emotively indicative.

Direct (as well as indirect) mind-to-mind and emotion-to-emotion causality and action, establishing n-dimensionally generalised four-planar social being means that we have to consider the way in which the properties of direct action are governed by principles of reciprocity, such as the attraction of likes or similars and the repulsion of opposites. These (and other) very broad principles apply to all respects of a thing including their location, not just in physical space but to their site and proximity to their ground-state, i.e. to their location on the cosmic envelope. Thus we have principles of attunement and affinity, containment and reflection. If the transcendental and non dual characterises mind and states of consciousness, while co-presence is enfolded within all being, including purely physical or material being, reciprocity and the principles of attunement, etc., which it entails characterise the domain of feeling and sentience. There is no temporal gap here between intention and fulfilment. Desire is just desire, and in the world of emergent emotionality (immediately) creates—in fantasy—its own fulfilment. Nor is there the same spatial uniqueness and separation so that the topology of these levels of being and connectivity are consistent with overlapping fields and bi- and multiple-location. These worlds constituted in principle by direct as well as indirect mediation between the properties that human beings have are unconstrained in the way in which the physical world is

The next point to note is that the sharp dichotomy between action and perception gives way, the distinction between the two becomes fuzzy and fluid. Action is no longer necessarily pre-meditated, but responsive and spontaneous, while perception is active and efficacious. We have already noticed the irreducibility of the 'I see it' in the identification of anything meaningful, valuable or transcendental; its irreducibility in any semiotics, phenomenology or axiology. Once we recognise the active qualities of perception, we can understand how these capacities can be enhanced in a re-enchanted reality. Thus we can begin (*a*) to see more[7] in a situation or thing, in a being at a given level, place or degree of determinacy, that is to read more meanings <u>in</u> it; and (*b*) to see more <u>of</u> a situation or thing or being, to see it more deeply or fully or in its more subtle level or aspects, to read more <u>of</u> it. These are two ways in which an expanded optics and hermeneutics follows immediately from the expanded ontology of a re-enchanted world.

When being is seen as meaningful, valuable and subtly connected, when agents are seen to be mentally and emotionally as well as physically empowered and when both of these quantum leaps of consciousness are seen to be underpinned by a supra-mental level of consciousness, that of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope, then we can begin to make sense of phenomena such as synchronicity and co-incidence; and how it is that things happen to us, as we happen to them in the world of our conceptually and emotionally charged experience. As we become more self-aware, our awareness in everyday life grows, we become more reflexive, until we get to the point where the norm of the unity of theory and practice, which drives the dialectic of philosophy on, takes us to that level in cosmic consciousness where, at the ground-state, this is consciousness of the whole cosmic envelope; so that our self-consciousness becomes an increasingly universal one, and the norm of unity in theory and practice comes to take in the totality of being.

[7] cf the M for More in (1M-5A) MECDA.

Secondly, in this newly re-enchanted world, we begin to transform in a radically empowering way our ways (or 'techniques') of acting. We will find that the best way to get is to give, that the best way to be full is to be empty; that the point of maximal leverage (coherence) is the point of least excitation (spontaneity); that we can easily become one with almost any other (in transcendental identification) because we are in fact one with all others (in co-presence); that it is not so difficult to directly intuit (or even communicate) at a distance; that we can empower ourselves by visualisation, that we can project and protect ourselves in all manner of different ways. We will begin to appreciate the power of concentration and attention, of awareness and observation without judgement; of unconditional love; of inwardisation. We will begin to discern creativity and intelligence at work everywhere, an inner knowingness that manifests itself in an outer coherence. We will begin to understand why it is that people know when they are being stared at from behind (even though there is no perceptual mechanism known to science by which this can be rendered explicable); and we will learn to appreciate the power of silence, the grace of space. We will begin to trust the intuition and knowingness of our own ground-states, the inner mentor, the inner voice which I suggested in the Preface to this book would effect the silent revolution to emancipate, and at the same time save, the human race.

* * * * *

It is characteristically the psychic being, mediating between the embodied personality and the ground state which receives, stores, activates and discharges the impulses of that causality which I have been calling reciprocity, that action at a distance (of space or time) which involves no emotional, mental or supra-mental distance, those forms of attunement which enable an act, interpreted as meaningful, to resonate for all similar beings everywhere. It is through the dynamics of reciprocity,

and an increasing awareness of enfolded co-presence within ourselves, that we unfold ourselves in an ever-increasingly universal way, so as to initiate, sustain and conclude that silent revolution which I spoke about in the Preface. This depends upon an ever-expanding accordion-like effect, as beings located on or diving towards their ground-states move in dialectically universalised synchronicity. This dynamic has been very well expressed by Jelalludin Rumi:

'Every forest branch moves differently
in the breeze, but as they sway,
they connect at the roots'

* * * * *

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Zen see Buddhism, Zen

ROY BHASKAR

FROM SCIENCE TO EMANCIPATION

Alienation and the actuality of enlightenment

JOURNEYS TOWARDS METAREALITY:
A PHILOSOPHY FOR THE PRESENT

ROUTLEDGE

From Science to Emancipation

From Science to Emancipation: alienation and the actuality of enlightenment is the second of three books elaborating Roy Bhaskar's philosophy of metaReality, which first appeared in rapid succession in 2002.

This book contains some of the original transcripts and the questions and answers they provoked, from a variety of lectures and workshops Roy Bhaskar presented for Indian audiences before this book was first published. Because of the spontaneous and informal nature of these talks and discussions, this book continues to provide the most immediate and accessible introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy as it charts his intellectual journey.

The talks recorded here have retained an immediate local but also a deeply universal interest. *From Science to Emancipation* provides an indispensable resource for all students of philosophy and the human sciences.

A new introduction to this edition by Mervyn Hartwig, founding editor of *The Journal of Critical Realism* and editor of *A Dictionary of Critical Realism* (Routledge, 2007), describes the context, significance and impact of *From Science to Emancipation*, and supplies an expert guide to its content.

Roy Bhaskar is the originator of the philosophy of critical realism, and the author of many acclaimed and influential works including *A Realist Theory of Science*, *The Possibility of Naturalism, Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom, Plato Etc.*, *From Science to Emancipation* and (with Mervyn Hartwig) *The Formation of Critical Realism*. He is an editor of *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change* and *Ecophilosophy in a World of Crisis*, and was the founding chair of the Centre for Critical Realism. He is currently World Scholar at the University of London Institute of Education and Director of the newly founded International Centre for Critical Realism located there.

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Roy Bhaskar

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From Science to Emancipation Manifesto of MetaReality

MetaReality is a new philosophical position devised by Roy Bhaskar, originator of the influential, international and multi-disciplinary philosophy of critical realism. It accepts but goes beyond critical realism, in so far as it pinpoints the reality of non-dual states and phases of being, showing how they underpin and sustain the totality of all forms of human, and indeed all, life. Understanding *metaReality* is to realise the limitations of the world of duality.

Critical realism already understands reality as structured and differentiated, as in process and changing, as a totality or whole and as containing human, potentially self-conscious, transformative agency. The world that humankind has made and which we currently inhabit is a world of duality: of unhappiness, oppression and strife—more especially, it is a world in which we are alienated from ourselves, each other, the activities in which we engage and the natural world we inhabit, currently hurtling into crisis and self-destruction.

The philosophy of *metaReality* describes the way in which this very world nevertheless depends upon, that is, is ultimately sustained by and exists only in virtue of the free, loving, creative, intelligent energy and activity of non-dual states of our being and

phases of our activity. In becoming aware of this we begin the process of transforming and overthrowing the totality of structures of oppression, alienation, mystification and misery we have produced; and the vision opens up of a balanced world and of a society in which the free development and flourishing of each unique human being is understood to be the condition, as it is also the consequence, of the free development and flourishing of all.

In developing this vision the philosophy of *metaReality* confirms and re-presents many aspects of the vision of the great philosophical traditions of the past, but does so in a radically new way, apt for contemporary times. We begin this process of becoming free, that is, of expanding the zone of non-duality within our lives, by becoming aware of all the elements that currently constitute them and throwing off all those elements which are inconsistent with our free, creative, loving natures. In this process we come to realise that the very world of misery and destitution we have created itself contains and is sustained by the seeds of a society of abundance, peace and fulfilment, in which we are all free to express and fulfil our essential natures.

Preface

This book describes my journey from my presentations of critical realism in 1997, when I was already interested in and working on spiritual and transcendental questions, trying at once to relate them to my philosophical explorations and at the same time to the weaknesses and failures of socialist and more generally Left-wing politics in the west; through to the position which I called transcendental dialectical critical realism, which I articulated in my book *From East to West*,[1] published in April 2000. And then the journey from that position, my first systematic attempt to integrate spirituality into the philosophical framework of critical realism, to the position which I now hold, which I have elaborated as the philosophy of metaReality.

The main difference between the philosophy of metaReality and critical realism, in all its forms, including the transcendental dialectical critical realist system articulated in *From East to West*, is that critical realism has been founded on the principle of nonidentity, and as such reflects the limitations of the world of duality; whereas the philosophy of metaReality stresses identity, identification and unity, and the ubiquity and centrality of *non-dual*

[1] Routledge, London and New York, 2000.

states and phases of being in our social life. The philosophy of metaReality accepts critical realism, as hitherto developed, as being the best account of the *dual* world of relative reality. That is a world which is at present (as it has been, as far as we can tell, in most recorded history) dominated by the *dualistic* world of demi-reality, in which the dualities of the world of relative reality sharpen into antagonistic, oppositional splits, proliferating into gaping contradictions and producing profound alienation at all the planes of social being.

Critical realism possesses a huge advantage over irrealist philosophies, whether of an orthodox (which would include empiricism, neo-positivism, neo-Kantianism, hermeneutics, structuralism, post-structuralism, including ethnomethodology and discourse theory) or a heterodox sort (ranging from various Marxist to various postmodernist positions, including ones which have been generated in the wake of the rise of the new social movements, particularly feminism, ecology and the peace movement). The advantage of critical realism is this: that for the most part and to the greater extent, these irrealist philosophies merely reflect the surface structure of relative reality, the world of demireal duality and the alienations, contradictions, reifications and dualisms of that world, which they merely replicate or elaborate in theory. Critical realism, in virtue of its commitment to the explicit thematisation of being and its understanding of the stratification of being and its development of the ideas of being as in process, as a totality and as incorporating transformative agency and reflexivity (as well as, in its latest, most contentious phase, a spiritual aspect) can show the possibilities of a non-dualistic world of duality, from which the structures which presently oppress us are shorn.

The deep structures which critical realism theorises are still however structures of duality, founded on principles of nonidentity; and so they cannot penetrate through to the non-dual basis which underpins the whole world of duality; including the structures of oppression and alienation which currently dominate not only the world of duality but its non-dual basis or ground.

There are three ways in which the world of non-duality underpins the world of duality:

1. It underpins it in a very quotidian, ordinary way as being essential to the constitution, that is the reproduction and transformation, of everyday life. Let me go into this a little bit here. Most philosophers who have talked about non-dual or transcendence/transcendental experiences have regarded them as being something very extraordinary, only achieved in special places or moments of communion with the divine or in nature or in some other way consisting in a bliss, peak and very unusual experience. Moreover, normally the other term in the experience of union or identity is left mysterious. On the contrary, I argue in developing the philosophy of metaReality that non-dual, including transcendental, experiences are essential for any form of communication between human beings, and ultimately any perception; and also for any act at all. For when you understand or even listen to what I say then in that moment of understanding or listening you are in a non-dual state of transcendental identification with me. Similarly, in order to act at all there must be something, at some level, which you do not do by thinking about how to do it, but which you just do, spontaneously, unconditionally, normally pretty effortlessly, and unless you acted in that non-dual way, you could never do anything at all. Moreover, in the case of communication, perception and action, the terms identified are clear enough: we are at one with another being or our action, and though we are not split or in duality, the terms which are identified are clearly defined, entities like you or me. In its most basic sense, transcendental identification is just unity with a context and there need be nothing mysterious about that.

In genealogical terms, elaboration of this moment of non-duality occurred to me by reflection of the way in which there was a non-algorithmic moment in any scientific revolution, discovery or even ordinary learning, that is a moment of pure creativity which could not be derived by induction or deduction or any mechanical formula. And it seemed clear to me that this was a very obvious paradigm of transcendence, with analogies to transcendence experiences in religion, art and other forms of life; but it was one, defining a moment of absolute transcendence in the movement of relative transcendence to a more totalising scientific or practical position, which was absolutely essential for the understanding of (among other activities) science, the

paradigmatic human activity for western philosophy from Descartes if not indeed Aristotle. An obvious question arose: what were the terms in the union when we had a moment of scientific or any other creativity, for in as much as it was a breakthrough, it was also a moment of emergence out of the blue. I came to see that this epistemological transcendence was quite consistent with ontological immanence. But in making full sense of this, I had to develop the idea of the moment of creativity, discovery or even simple learning (or re-creativity) as involving the union between something already enfolded within the discovering agent, brought up to consciousness by a moment of Platonic anamnesis or recall, with the alethic self-revelation of the being known, existing outside him. And this is of course, in all its terms—that of the subjective condition, the objective result and the union between the two—is a very radical theory of discovery, one applicable, however, to all spheres of learning and, *a fortiori*, to all human life.

So this is the first way in which the world of non-duality underpins the structures of duality, including dualism.

2. The second way in which non-duality underpins the world of duality depends on a feature of the stratification of being which critical realism should find it particularly easy to situate. Science reveals a hierarchy of strata in being; and such stratification is a very characteristic feature of all forms of activity and being. Theories of emancipation, whether secular or religious, have always posited a level of human nature or potential which, in some way, either man himself, or his existing social order, inhibits, stunts, suppresses or even altogether screens or occludes. The task of emancipation has characteristically been conceived as involving the throwing off of this emergent oppressive level which reposes on the primary; foundational but suppressed level. Christianity, Buddhism, Marxism, Western liberalism all involve the idea of human nature, which would usher in a better world, if only the structures which fetter it could be thrown off.

Now there is a crucial strengthening of this position which I would like to register. And that is that this level which actually underpins and sustains the world which we know must already contain all, but not necessarily only, what we need to realise the

utopian ideal. Thus we must assume that human nature, as it is constituted now, must be capable of sustaining a communist society in which, in Marx's vision of it, 'the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all', could be realised. And similarly, that human beings even now must be capable of being able to evaluate the realisation of all other beings in the universe as highly as their own, as in the ideal of the Bodhisattva. These are not utopian ideals. Rather, they point to or indicate a level which is an actual and continually efficacious condition of possibility for all states of being and systems of social order. This level of an essential human nature is actualised everywhere as a necessary condition for everything we do, it is a condition of the world which oppresses us and in which we oppress ourselves. Thus consider the phenomenon of war. This phenomenon, in a way the epitome of human hatred, is sustained only through the selfless solidarity of soldiers fighting at the front and the support they receive from their sisters, daughters and mothers at home.

This idea developed from an argument which made use of a concept I had already introduced as early as *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*,[2] namely that of an ultimatum, an ultimate or basic level of the universe which would have to be ingredient or immanent in all other levels of the universe emergent from it. This idea of an ultimatum is developed in the philosophy of metaReality into the idea of all beings having a *ground-state*, which both embodies the qualities necessary to bind the universe together as a whole and at the same time is always specifically differentiated in the species or being concerned. Thus every species, and every being within a species, will in principle have a different ground-state, but they will be united with every other ground-state through, and at the level of the ultimatum, what I call the *cosmic envelope*. The ground-state qualities of human beings consist *inter alia* in their energy, intelligence, creativity, love, capacity for right-action and the fulfilment of their intentionality or will in their objectifications in the natural and social world. It is the energy, intentionality and qualities of the ground-state which are everywhere used and abused in the world of the emergent orders which

[2] Verso, London and New York, 1993.

they sustain, and which constitute the hidden or dominated basis or ground of all our alienation, suffering and ills.

This then is the second mode in which non-duality is central to social life and human agency. It is that level without which no other level could exist and have the particular properties they do, no matter how horrendous they are.

3. There is a third level, only slightly more recondite, in virtue of which non-duality can be said to underpin the world of duality and dualism. This is the sense in which if you go deeply enough into any aspect of being you will find buried in its fine structure or deep interior qualities which can only be described in terms of such quasi-metaphorical language as emptiness (*sunyata*), suchness (*tathata*), the void or the Buddha-nature, pure unbounded love or *sat-chit-anand*, that is the bliss consciousness of being which, whether you want to argue it possesses a teleological dynamic, in the sense that in some actual or metaphorical way all things strive for it (so that it would then be the fundamental driving force of evolution), it nevertheless certainly constitutes, in interiorised form, the ground-state of every moment of all being, the 'quiddity' of everything which is.

Whereas the first two modes of non-duality can be shown by relatively simple transcendental *arguments*, this third mode has to be *experienced*, and pertains to the experience of mystics and poets throughout the ages. However, these three modes are also interrelated. For if you go deeply enough into any non-dual state you are in, or into any being or object you have achieved transcendental identification with, ultimately you will come to *that* mystical experience, and when you do, you will be at one with its ground-state in *your* ground-state. At this point, we have, if you like, the unity or transcendental identification of two ground-states.

These are not the only ways in which the philosophy of meta-Reality differentiates itself from existing critical realism. But this is not the place to articulate those further differences. My *Reflections on MetaReality*[3] does that; and they have been systematically

[3] Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London, April 2002.

set out in *The Philosophy of MetaReality*,[4] where I show how we need to add two additional levels of ontology to the existing five of critical realism. The first, which I call the sixth realm (6R) of *re-enchantment*; and the second which I call the seventh zone or awakening (7Z/A) of *non-duality*, underpin the existing five levels which I rehearse in Chapter 1 of this book. Moreover these issues come up systematically throughout the book, and in the interview in Chapter 10 with Mervyn Hartwig, the differences between critical realism and metaReality are specifically thematised. It is also just worth mentioning here that this book has a companion, consisting in a sustained series of dialogues, *Fathoming the Depths of Reality: Savita Singh in Conversation With Roy Bhashar*,[5] which retraces in great detail the development of these ideas from their first seeds in the late 1960s and early 70s through to the present.

This book is based on talks given in Europe, Asia and America over the years 1997–2002. The most basic acknowledgement I need to make is that of my appreciation of and thanks to the organisers of the meetings, projects or programmes in which they were held, all voluntary contributions by people dedicated to the cause of free debate and discussion of these issues. Without such unconditional commitment none of these talks could have taken place. During the initial stages of the period covered by the talks in this book, my colleagues in the Centre for Critical Realism, and its sister organisation the International Association of Critical Realism, played a very important role. In particular I must mention Andrew Collier, Margaret Archer, Doug Porpora, Tony Lawson, Alan Norrie, Nick Hostettler, Sean Vertigan and Mervyn Hartwig. I was at one point intending to write a book with the first three of these, and a discussion which took place around some propositions which I had formulated on the basis of the discussions the four of us had had, is recorded in the interlude between Chapters 5 and 6. It will be apparent then that, though we were all committed to the importance of the philosophical discussion of issues

[4] *The Philosophy of MetaReality Volume I: Creativity, Love and Freedom*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London, forthcoming.

[5] Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London, forthcoming.

to do with spirituality and religion, and to the idea of their compatibility with a this-worldly approach oriented to transformative political practices, there were, even then, differences in the ways we were going; so that the book we intended to write together, they are now pursuing, with my best wishes, on their own.

My lecture and workshop tours in America, and possibly even more so in India, played a decisive role in stimulating the formation of the ideas which the philosophy of metaReality articulates. To my friends and organisers in America, especially Hans Despain, Howard Engelskirchen, Hans Ehrbar, Doug Porpora, Charlie Smith (but many more could be mentioned and are gratefully remembered), go my very special thanks. It seems even more gratuitous to single out a few people in India, when there are so many people who have done so much; but it would be extremely unfair of me not to record my very special appreciation of the unstinting work put in by Manindra Thakur, Savita Singh, Nirmalya Chakraborty and Madhucchanda Sen, and Lakshmi Kumar. However, I am only too aware of how much I owe to all those throughout the world whom I haven't specifically mentioned here.

Now is perhaps the time to say that, in a way, my greatest debt of all has been to my audiences, without their presence and attention, without the stimulus of their debate and questions, these ideas would not have been sharpened into their present form. Then I would like to thank my British-based organisers, who no less than their non-British counterparts played an absolutely indispensable role—among them are Juliet Nusser and Pauline Hadley. All these transcripts were superbly typed by Jenny Cobner, with great speed and accuracy, backed up with good philosophical acumen, and she also put the final touches to much of the editing work. Then I must thank my publisher, Tejeshwar Singh and all at Sage, especially Omita Goyal, for her extraordinary efficiency, industry and commitment. Andrew Neal also helped in the final stages in an administrative capacity; and finally I must express, not for the first time, my warmest appreciation to Elaine Parker for her unique qualities and commitment.

10 June 2002 **Roy Bhaskar**

Introduction*

Acronyms

CM	classical modernism
CN	critical naturalism
CR	critical realism
DCR	dialectical critical realism
EC	explanatory critique
HM	high modernism
M	the theory and practice of modernization
PDM	the philosophical discourse of modernity
PM	postmodernism
PMR	the philosophy of metaReality
TDCR	transcendental dialectical critical realism
T/F	bourgeois triumphalism and endism/fundamentalism
TR	transcendental realism

* A note on terminology. 'MetaReality' and cognate terms were originally spelt with a hyphen: 'Meta-Reality' (at the beginning of a sentence); otherwise 'meta-Reality', including within titles and chapter headings (with the exception of *Reflections on*

From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment is the second of three books elaborating Roy Bhaskar's new philosophy of metaReality, which appeared in rapid succession in 2002.[1] Routledge has commissioned me to write Introductions to these volumes, which it is currently reissuing under its own imprint. I have set out my global understanding of the new philosophy in the Introduction to *Reflections on MetaReality*,[2] which I will not repeat here except to say that I take its fundamental message to be that if we humans are to freely flourish in a sustainable way, we will have to get back in tune with nature understood as a totality profoundly interconnected at the level of the real, acting, as Bhaskar puts it in the present volume, 'from the perspective of the whole totality', i.e. 'the whole of the universe' (pp. 251–2).[3] For the convenience of the reader,

MetaReality). In future publications Roy Bhaskar has decided to dispense with the hyphen and to capitalize the first letter of 'metaReality' in titles and chapter headings. I have accordingly followed suit here.

[1] Roy Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality: Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, [2002] 2011); *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment* (New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, London: Sage, 2002); and *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, Volume I, *Creativity, Love and Freedom* (New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, London: Sage, 2002; to be reissued by Routledge as *The Philosophy of MetaReality: Creativity, Love and Freedom*). Unattributed page numbers in what follows refer to *From Science to Emancipation*.

[2] Mervyn Hartwig, 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality*.

[3] This ancient philosophical theme of reconciliation with the natural order is currently being resumed, from different perspectives, by secularly minded mainstream Western philosophers. See for example Mark Johnston, *Saving God: Religion after Idolatry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) and *Surviving Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Thomas Nagel, 'Secular philosophy and the religious temperament' in his *Secular Philosophy and the Religious Temperament: Essays 2002–2008* 3–18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Galen Strawson, 'Religion is a sin', *London Review of Books* 33(11) 2011, 26–8. Unlike Johnston and Strawson, the philosophy of metaReality leaves open the question of whether the absolute is transcendent to the universe as well as immanent within it – whether what Bhaskar calls the cosmic envelope or ground of the universe itself has a ground or creator (see for example p. 274).

however, I reproduce the tables that accompanied that essay, which are I believe valuable aids to understanding Bhaskar's philosophy and grasping its coherent systematicity, whether considered synchronically or diachronically. These are grouped together at the end of this Introduction, the main focus of which will be on what is new and/or distinctive in *From Science to Emancipation*, including the clarification of existing positions and how they morphed into the philosophy of metaReality.

One of the most fascinating and invaluable features of the book is that it provides a record of Bhaskar's intellectual journey from 1997 to 2002, a period spanning the final years of the investigative phase (1995–98) of his spiritual turn and the actual production of the main works of that turn (1999–2002). It is the only one of his books that is made up almost entirely of transcripts of 'holistic performance[s]' (p. 316) with audiences, in lectures, seminars, workshops and interviews, pitched at a relatively popular level.[4] The audiences are varied, mostly students and/or academics in the UK and India, but also teachers in Pune (Chapter 11) and members of the general public in Kolkata (Chapter 12), some of whose members are familiar with critical realism, many not. The topics traverse the whole of his system as Bhaskar walks the talk, practising 'the dialectics of recapitulation' in which we 'thoroughly come to terms with, understand and then shed, let go of . . . the presence of the past' (p. 45), as a propaedeutic to the elaboration of the new, having embedded what is valuable from the past in the depths of our being such that '[we] do not carry the knowledge of Greek or some other philosophy in [our] head, it is in [us]' (p. 252). For someone who is a relative novice in critical realism and philosophy more generally, there is no better single introduction to Bhaskar's overall thought than this book.[5] But there is also much that is of great value for the more advanced. *From Science to Emancipation* is a treasure store

[4] The exceptions are the brief Manifesto of metaReality (a version of which appears in the other two metaReality volumes) and the Preface. A partial exception is Chapter 13, which was 'abstracted' by Bhaskar from the transcript of a three-day workshop.

[5] Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism* (London: Routledge, 2010) is pitched at a more advanced level, as is Chapter 4 of Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality*.

of rich and pithy sayings, felicitous formulations and quotable quotes – more so than his other works, for Bhaskar is in his *dharma*[6] in these performances, speaking spontaneously from the depths of his being. Two examples must suffice. 'Everything would collapse', he tells a gathering at the Kolkata Centre of the Krishnamurti Foundation in 2002, 'without absence, without negativity, without the not' (p. 334) – a sentiment which is the exact opposite of the dominant monovalent materialist view beautifully caught by Honoré Balzac in 1842: 'To modern philosophy, the void does not exist. If there were ten feet of void, the world would cave in!'[7] Only a few breaths earlier, having suggested that, although when we are true to our essential natures we 'just flow' spontaneously, as the sun and the moon 'just shine', it is more than possible for ignorant humans to prevent this, he asks: 'When is the full moon coming? Does it ever come anymore in Kolkata?' (p. 333) – a question that adroitly aligns the smog over our cities with the categorial smog of the demi-real, and gives us to understand that the former will not lift until we get rid of the latter.

Two of the leading themes of the book are already announced in its title: that the movement of the earlier philosophy of critical realism 'from science to emancipation' tacitly presupposes the spirituality of the philosophy of metaReality (PMR) and that enlightenment is 'actual': people are already abundantly in possession of the qualities that are necessary for building eudaimonia, which are presupposed by and manifest in every genuine human act ('ultimately human beings are fine, they are absolutely fine, there is nothing wrong with them, they are beautiful' [p. 304]); 'all' that remains to be done is to shed what is inconsistent with and parasitic upon our higher selves. The Preface contains an important statement about the relation of PMR to critical realism

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[6] Bhaskar deploys the concept of *dharma* for the first time in print in *From Science to Emancipation* (p. 265 [May 2002]). It is also employed in Chapters 11–13, which date from a few months earlier, suggesting that he first began to use it in oral presentations at about this time – which was also the time when the philosophy of metaReality as such crystallized (see Note 11 and accompanying text, below).

[7] Cited in Mervyn Hartwig, 'Valence, valency', in *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. M. Hartwig (London: Routledge, 2007), 497.

and an indication of the three ways in which non-duality underpins the realm of duality, incorporating an important genealogical note to the effect that PMR had its inception in reflection on the moment of absolute transcendence or pure creativity in scientific discovery, involving experience of union or identity, one implication of which is that creative science, tacitly or otherwise, presupposes metaReality and creative scientists are 'practical mystics'.[8] The main contents of the book are organized into four parts. The first, comprising two lectures in Mumbai, recaps the progressive development of critical realism (including transcendental dialectical critical realism (TDCR), nicely epitomized as 'basically [the application of] transcendental realism to the self' [p. 24]), to the point where PMR begins to come immanently critically into view as developmentally consistent with, but remedying a lack in critical realism at the level of the absolute. The second is devoted to 'debates within and about critical realism' and includes Bhaskar's famous encounters with Ernesto Laclau and Rom Harré, in the areas of discourse theory and ethnomethodology, respectively; his first public seminar, in November 1999, on TDCR (Chapter 5) – a great and brave talk, articulating a dialectic of co-presence (which I will come back to) of 'an irrealist categorial structure masking and overlaying . . . a profound deeper realist structure which is waiting (and wanting) to be free' (p. 127), that decisively broke the taboo on discussing religion and spirituality (other than sociologically) within the critical realist community; 'twelve propositions on transcendence, critical realism and God' ('Interlude', pp. 145f.), which Bhaskar presented to a closed seminar in London in December of the same year and which have remained central to his thinking in this area; and an eloquent plea for tolerance and boldly creative thinking addressed to a conference of the

[8] The Preface also announces (p. xv) a forthcoming 'companion' to *From Science to Emancipation,* namely *Fathoming the Depths of Reality: Savita Singh in Conversation With Roy Bhaskar*. This has not to date been published. The interviews for the book took place in New Delhi shortly after 9/11 and a rough transcript was made, but that is as far as the matter was taken. Both authors have since had other priorities. Bhaskar has not returned to India since 2002, and Singh has gone on to become, inter alia, a famous Hindi poet.

International Association for Critical Realism at the University of Lancaster in August 2000 after the first book of his spiritual turn, *From East to West*, had met with hostile criticism, including from myself (Chapter 6).[9] The third part, 'En route from transcendental dialectical critical realism to the philosophy of metaReality', comprising two lectures (Chapters 8 and 9) and an interview (Chapter 10), covers the period in which the philosophy of metaReality was actually born; why the interview, which is actually organized around the first of the metaReality books, *Reflections on MetaReality*, is included here is not wholly clear to me – perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the interviewer, unlike the interviewee, was still 'en route to the philosophy of metaReality'.[10] One important detail about the genesis of PMR not registered in this volume is that the idea of metaReality did not really crystallize until late 2001/early 2002, while Bhaskar was in India, and that this coincided with the most serious outbreak of sectarian violence in India since 1947 – a development that sharpened Bhaskar's urge to produce a secular version of his spiritual philosophy, one that is not hostage to institutionalized religion.[11] Chapter 8 is perhaps the best single place to turn for Bhaskar's critique of postmodernism, although this topic is also treated at some length in both the other metaReality books. The metaReal critique of the discursive intellect, on the other hand, the subject of Chapter 9 (and also 12), which was inaugurated in *Reflections*,

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[9] Bhaskar's presentation was preceded by critical presentations by myself and Nick Hostettler. A more balanced version of mine was published as 'New Left, New Age, new paradigm? Roy Bhaskar's *From East to West*', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 31(2) 2001, 139–65. Nick Hostettler's views of the time may be found in Nick Hostettler and Alan Norrie, 'Do you like soul music?' *Alethia* 3(2) 2000, 2–8 and the same authors' 'Are critical realist ethics foundationalist?' in *Critical Realism: The Difference It Makes*, ed. J. Cruickshank (London: Routledge, 2003), 30–54.

[10] This is perhaps the place to add that, in editing the transcript, I (the interviewer) got what Bhaskar had said about the ground-state not quite right, which he has indicated by placing my question and part of the answer attributed to him within square brackets (p. 262, last two paragraphs).

[11] Bhaskar, personal communication; Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 168.

is carried through definitively in *The Philosophy of MetaReality*. The fourth part is devoted to exploration of themes within PMR: the primacy of self-referentiality in education and emancipation more generally; of the supramental consciousness of the ground-state in creativity; and, finally, of love in the coherence of theory and practice in practice and ultimately the cosmos.

The philosophy of metaReality arguably largely vindicates the intuition of the young Bhaskar that, of the three branches of the philosophical project he embarked on in the 1960s – a realist philosophy of science, a realist philosophy of social science and critique of the philosophical ideologies that constrain human freedom – ideology-critique would prove the most important.[12] *From Science to Emancipation* brings this out perhaps better than any other work, but it broadens and deepens our understanding of ideology-critique to include, not just the theory of Karl Marx (whose influence is handsomely acknowledged [pp. 217–19]), but theories of emancipation in general, West and East, which

> whether secular or religious, have always posited a level of human nature or potential which, in some way, either man himself, or his existing social order, inhibits, stunts, suppresses or even altogether screens or occludes. The task of emancipation has characteristically been conceived as involving the throwing off of this emergent oppressive level which reposes on the primary, foundational but suppressed level. (p. xii)

This is the dialectic of deep realist and surface irrealist categorial structures to which I have already alluded. In the course of reading the book, we come to see that it is ultimately the fundamental logic of emancipatory critique entrained by this dialectic that propels Bhaskar's system beyond realism to metaRealism. There are a number of milestones along the way. First, the basic

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[12] I mooted this as a possibility in Mervyn Hartwig, 'Introduction' to *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, by Roy Bhaskar (London: Routledge, [1986] 2009), xi–xli xl–xli. For an account of the intuition, see Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 33, 37–8, 55.

structure of emancipatory critique and the theories of the TINA formation and the demi-real[13] that it entrains are already given in the argument of transcendental realism for the inexorability of ontology: not only is ontology necessary, but if your ontology is inadequate, you will necessarily presuppose in your practice an adequate one (pp. 172, 217). Second, this already presupposes ontological and alethic truth – that truth is fundamentally a real feature of the world:

> [H]ow could we live in a world which was not constituted by truths? What would we be doing? Such a world would be a subjectivist – a huge subjectivist – illusion. It would mean, really, that there would be no constraint, either within me, or outside me, or on me doing anything. As soon as you introduce the idea of a constraint on your potentiality you have to have the idea of alethic truth, that that constraint is truly a constraint on your potentiality. (p. 286)

Third, implicit within the notion of alethic truth is a concept of truth or reality as absolute (p. 187).[14] Fourth, implicit within that in a context of depth-stratification is the notion of an ultimate or metaReal stratum of identity-in-difference, already mooted in *Dialectic*, ingredient in and sustaining everything else, analogously to the ingredience of fundamental particles in emergent levels of being – the absolute as such (pp. 166, 181), otherwise known in PMR as the ground-state and cosmic envelope. Fifth – and this is crucial – the experience of union or identity in the moment of

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[13] *From Science to Emancipation* contains the first published reference to demi-reality (Ch. 2, 'Critical realism and Marxism' [March 1997], 55). Bhaskar (personal communication) had been using the concept in oral presentations from 1994. The fundamental structure of a TINA compromise formation, a concatenation of which constitutes the demi-real or web of *maya* (illusion), is identical with the structure apprehended, tacitly or otherwise, in emancipatory thought: 'the suppression by the false of the truth on which it depends and which sustains it' (p. 219).

[14] Cf. '[O]ne's account of the real grounds or reasons for something is fallible, but the grounds themselves are not . . . Ontological "infallibilism" is necessary for epistemic fallibilism.' Bhaskar with Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 131–2.

absolute transcendence in any process of learning or discovery can only be rendered fully intelligible on the basis that it involves

> the union between something already enfolded within the discovering agent, brought up to consciousness by a moment of Platonic anamnesis or recall,[15] with the alethic self-revelation of the being known, existing outside him (p. xii)

– i.e. it involves the union of two beings at the level of the implicit, supramental consciousness of their ground-states, entailing the theory of generalized co-presence or interconnectedness – that at the level of fundamental possibility or alethia everything is implicitly contained within everything else. From there it is but a short step to link 'the latent immanent teleology of praxis'[16] (the pulse of freedom of *Dialectic*) to the immanent teleology of the ground-state and cosmic envelope, and to view everything in the universe as enchanted and as 'in the process of becoming one with its ground-state' (p. 277).[17] This move constitutes an immanent critique of Marx's theory, which 'does successfully capture a deep, perhaps the deepest dual level, in our social structure'[18] but

> one which presupposes, and depends on the efficacy of a deeper, untheorised level, that of the ground-state qualities of unrecognised (non-commodified) creativity and unconditional love and other ground-state qualities that Marx did not theorise, just as his vision of a communist society

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[15] This does *not* mean, Bhaskar subsequently explains (p. 244), that knowledge is, as for Plato, 'basically recollection', rather that the potential to see it, which is always already enfolded within us, is awakened.

[16] Roy Bhaskar, *Plato Etc.: The Problems of Philosophy and their Resolution* (London: Routledge, [1994] 2010), 154.

[17] PMR is thus a form of panentheism, which, however, is significantly different from the Platonic panentheism espoused by Nagel ('Secular philosophy') and Hegelian panentheism (see for example Sebastian Job, 'Human sciences at the edge of panentheism: God and the limits of ontological realism' in Mervyn Hartwig and Jamie Morgan (eds), *Critical Realism and Spirituality* (London: Routledge, 2011), 170–86.

[18] Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, 356.

> actually depends on the process of self-realisation or enlightenment and its universalisation that the individual process ['the free development of each'] both implies and presupposes for its completion.[19]

It is also an immanent critique of critical realism which, although it provides 'the best account of what we have to get rid of' (p. 266), no more than Marx can satisfactorily resolve the paradox or antinomy of the co-presence of realism and irrealism, essential freedom and actual slavery, potential plenty and dire scarcity (pp. 128f., 156, 171f.).

> If realism is true . . . why is it that irrealism is so dominant? Well irrealism is so dominant because it reflects the irrealist, reified, heteronomous, oppressive structures of the societies in which we exist. Realism can only be conceived to be true if it reflects a deeper, more basic level which most of us have not fully developed or have so overlaid with structures that are irrealist in character that we find it difficult either to see why most people are irrealist, reified or unfree or to believe that realism, freedom, spontaneity, creativity, love, can actually be alethically true. (p. 171)

The antinomy is resolved, then, by the thesis, first articulated in *From East to West* and the presentations leading up to it, and thereafter given a more secular cast, that

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[19] Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, 356, n. 10. On Enrique Dussel's reading, Marx does actually theorize the non-commodified creativity of 'living labour', which by contrast to labour-power stands outside capital as 'not-capital' and is the ultimate source of value, though of course he cannot ground this at the level of the absolute. See Enrique Dussel, *Towards an Unknown Marx: A Commentary on the Manuscripts of 1861–3*, trans. Yolanda Angulo, ed. Fred Moseley (London: Routledge, 2001) and C. J. Arthur, *The New Dialectic and Marx's* 'Capital' (Leiden: Brill, 2002). Before 2001, Bhaskar himself had not won through to the insight that the alethia of irrealism is, not realism, as he indicated in an address in August 2000 (p. 170), but metaRealism.

> man is essentially godlike, subsisting and acting in a world of relativity and duality. A difference springs up only as a product of illusion. And it is the essential nature of man to come to see through this illusion and to realise their self-consciousness as free and/or godlike. (p. 129)

What we have here is a truly thoroughgoing naturalism that completely recasts the naturalism espoused by the positivistic, and tacitly endorsed by the Kantian, tradition.[20] The great aporia of the former is its inability to sustain an account of intentional causality, and the great mirroring aporia of the latter is the unknowability of the self that confers intelligibility on the world (p. 11). The partial critical realist resolution of both aporiai is carried through in the philosophy of metaReality. Both self and world are knowable, and human consciousness and intentional agency are emergent powers of the fundamental structure of possibility of the universe. This immediately entrains a critique of those religious traditions that emphasize God's ontological transcendence at the expense of his immanence, as well as of the doctrine of original sin or fallenness and of emancipation or

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[20] Cf. '[N]ature without humanity contains almost all the categories of the dialectic', with the exception of categorial error (p. 77) and the rational kernel of Hegelian dialectic, involving transcendence and emergence, applies 'by slight extension of the argument' to the non-human world (p. 57). The charge of 'anti-naturalism' has been brought against Bhaskar's *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Ted Benton, 'Realism in social science: some comments on Roy Bhaskar's *The Possibility of Naturalism*', *Radical Philosophy* 27 1981, 13–21), but in fact Bhaskar rescues naturalism by thoroughly revising our understanding of the natural order. '[H]ow strange the truth about physical reality must be', writes Galen Strawson, a professed Spinozan (a)theist, 'given that consciousness is itself a wholly physical phenomenon' (Strawson, 'Religion is a sin', p. 26). But of course there is a sense in which it is not so strange, it is natural, and we are natural beings. It is we who are estranged from an adequate understanding of our relation to nature (cf. Peter Dickens, 'Society, subjectivity and the cosmos', *Journal of Critical Realism* 10(1) 2011, 5–35). On PMR, the potential for human consciousness is enfolded in 'physical reality' from the outset, and it is contingent that such consciousness has emerged and whence it will evolve; for Strawson, by contrast, 'good acts, good states of mind, are part of the history of the universe for ever' ('Religion is a sin', p. 28).

salvation as coming from without rather than, necessarily, from within: a transcendent god entails an immanent god, that people have the potential within them to conform to god's will (p. 358).[21]

There is a great deal else that is clarified or illuminated in *From Science to Emancipation*. Yes, Bhaskar does think that Marx got the fundamental structures of capitalism right (p. 55), and that class has relative primacy in social explanation (pp. 198–9) and the economy primacy under capitalism (p. 195) – can any sane person doubt it in these days of reverberating financial crisis and enforced compliance with the dictates of the market? Furthermore, in our world of globalizing capital, the demi-real is literally waging war against absolute reality, 'the vicious world' of commodification and reification against 'the virtuous world', for possession of relative reality; and although it can never ultimately triumph, it could well destroy the physical basis of our existence before people decide to walk away from it (p. 130; see also pp. 179, 195, 199, 251, 284).[22] *Pace* much of the Marxist tradition, however, ideas are 'indisputably the dominant force in history' and getting them right is of the utmost importance (p. 170). One of Bhaskar's great gifts as a philosopher is his ability to identify with utmost precision a debilitating aporia within a tradition of thought and resolve it with a great and clear idea, the promulgation of which he is then 'totally clear and single-pointed about' – as he recommends we all should be in the pursuit of any goal, for it will eventually lead us into our *dharma* (pp. 345, 356). What the emancipatory projects of the West – communist, socialist and social democratic alike – have signally failed to address is the question of who will educate the educators. The primacy of self-transformation in social change is the obvious remedy of this lack, and it shines

[21] See also Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, 'Beyond East and West', *in Critical Realism and Spirituality*, eds Mervyn Hartwig and Jamie Morgan (London: Routledge, 2011), 187–202.

[22] Cf. 'you cannot be a truly spiritual being unless you are committed to the overthrow of capitalism' (Bhaskar, *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, 354).

through in this book: 'if you want to transform society, you have got to educate and transform yourself' (p. 276). 'So little creativity, so little love, had been allowed to be expressed under actually existing socialism' (p. 275).[23] We will never be rid of master–slavery until we get rid of the master–slavery internalized within our embodied personalities and consistently act consistently with our ground-states.

This moral is brought home in a stunning meditation on the theme of love that concludes the volume. This was abstracted from material developed for a workshop for residents of Kolkata, mainly but not exclusively academics, a few days before 9/11 in the gardens of the Rabindranath Tagore Ashram in Santiniketan, West Bengal. Invoking the paths to union with totality of the Vedic tradition, specifically the paths of truth (*jnana* yoga), of practice (*karma* yoga) and of love (*bhakti* yoga), Bhaskar demonstrates that, though distinct, they are ultimately one: a tri-unity. For love, first, is at the heart of the three modes in which non-duality sustains duality, corresponding to that other critical realist trinity, the domains of the empirical/conceptual, the actual and the real, respectively: it is the fine structure or ultimate binding force of the universe (closely linked with *sat-chit-ananda* or the implicit bliss-consciousness of beings); it is involved centrally in our social interactions, especially in the form of transcendental identity consciousness; and it is a natural ground-state property of human and other beings – indeed, the totality (cosmic envelope, god) is above all 'pure unbounded love' (p. 353). Second, beginning with self-love or love of our essential self, love radiates, like ripples in a pool, in ever-widening circles of union (totalities): love for another human, for all humans, for all beings, and finally for god or the cosmic envelope, on which the ground-states of all beings sit and are interrelated. Because love of self, which properly understood is

[23] A more straightforwardly secular version of the primacy of self-transformation is nowadays receiving strong support from within the Marxist tradition. See Michael A. Lebowitz, *The Socialist Alternative: Real Human Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010). Lebowitz draws on his experience as an erstwhile advisor to the Chávez regime in Venezuela.

love of god (the god within) – '*god is . . . the only thing you can love*' (p. 351, original emphasis) – is a precondition for the other circles of love, and true love is always 'love loving love' (pp. 350, 359), namely you in your ground-state loving the quality of love in the ground-state of other beings, these circles constitute ever-widening forms of self-realization, of action in consistency with our ground-states. Finally, both the path of truth and the path of practice centrally involve love, for the conatus to truth is a drive to union with what you seek to know and the conatus to free flourishing a drive to the totality that is universal self-realization. In this way, the conatus to truth (theory) and freedom (practice) – epistemological dialectics and emancipatory axiology – find their ultimate unifying basis in love, and 'the coherence of theory and practice in practice' of *Dialectic*[24] is beautifully finessed as the coherence of love. Towards the end of the piece Bhaskar engages briefly in cosmological speculation that addresses the deep human future. The path of love issues first in individual self-realization, marking the beginning of the return cycle from alienation, then in universal self-realization or eudaimonia (the secular counterpart of the heaven on earth or theosis of the religious traditions), inaugurating an epoch of unconstrained flourishing and development, for 'no heteronomy . . . can withstand the scrutiny and power of love' (p. 352). Next it issues in complete union, a universal becoming one or merging with the cosmic totality (universal god-realization), as in the state of *fana* in the Sufi tradition and *nirvana* in the Buddhist, a merging which sees the elimination not just of demi-reality but of relative reality as such. Finally, we can imagine the cycle of cosmotheogeny coming to an end analogously to Big Crunch, and then being repeated, from autopoiesis out of nothing to universal god-realization. This is in no sense a posthumanism, for that tradition stresses the uniqueness and separateness of humanity from the cosmos, not its unity with it.[25] It is rather a very

[24] Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* (London: Routledge, [1993] 2008), 207.

[25] See for example Samuel Wilkinson and Nick Haslam, 'Is the future more or less human? Different views of humanness in the posthumanism debate', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 39(2) 2009, 247–66.

radical humanism, an 'anthropocosmism'[26] that views humans from the perspective of the universe, on which the whole of being is creatively unfolding, it is entirely contingent that we humans are playing a role in this,[27] and whether and how we continue to do so is very much up to us.

Mervyn Hartwig
May/June 2011

[26] Seo MinGyu, 'Bhaskar's philosophy as anti-anthropism: a comparative study of Eastern and Western thought', *Journal of Critical Realism* 7(1) 2008, 5–28.

[27] Bhaskar rejects the argument for god from fine tuning or 'anthropic coincidences' as 'absurd' because the chances of any concretely singular being being what it is in the universe as we know it (for example, of you being you) are always astronomical and for all we know there may be an infinity of universes (p. 276).

Table 1 The moments of the philosophy of critical realism and metaReality mapped to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain and the twofold process of immanent critique

Stadion/Moment	*1M Non-identity*	*2E Negativity*	*3L Totality*	*4D Transformative agency*	*5A Spirituality*	*6R (Re-) enchantment*	*7A/Z Non-duality*
CR/PMR as a whole: thinking being	as such and in general	as process + as for 1M	as a totality + as for 2E	as incorporating transformative praxis and reflexivity + as for 3L	as incorporating a spiritual or a transcendental dimension + as for 4D	as incorporating enchantment + as for 5A	as incorporating non-duality + as for 6R
Form of reflexivity – immanent critique of PDM + CR	classical modernism	high modernism + 1M	modernization theory + 1M, 2E	postmodernism + 1M, 2E, 3L	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A	
TR: thinking being as	**structured** and **differentiated**						
CN inflection: thinking being as	containing mind and concepts	**negativity, dualism, contradiction, emergence**					
EC inflection: thinking being as	intrinsically valuable	negativity qua absenting constraints (ills)	totality as including **values** (retotalization)				

DCR inflection: thinking being as	alethic truth (reality principle, axiological necessity); underlying identity-in-difference; co-presence; the pulse of freedom	negativity qua (determinate) absence, generalized to the whole of being as real, primary to presence and essential to change	totality maximized by praxis (which absents incompleteness); dialectical universalizability; unity-in-diversity	transformative praxis and **reflexivity** (the unity of theory and practice in practice, emancipatory axiology)	
TDCR inflection: thinking being as	underlying identity-in-difference – transcendentally real self and God (the absolute) as the truth or ground of reality; co-presence	transcendence (the achievement of identity or unity in a total context) as essential to change and the rational kernel of any learning process; creativity	unconditional love	spontaneous right-action (realization of reflexivity, i.e. self-realization)	**spirituality** fulfilled intentionality; universal self-realization; reflexivity generalized as cosmic consciousness

(*Continued*)

Table 1—continued

Stadion/Moment	*1M Non-identity*	*2E Negativity*	*3L Totality*	*4D Transformative agency*	*5A Spirituality*	*6R (Re-) enchantment*	*7A/Z Non-duality*
PMR inflection: the spiritual exposition of being – thinking being as	underlying identity-in-difference (implicitly conscious) – ground-state and cosmic envelope (the absolute, non-duality, metaReality) as the truth or ground of reality; generalized co-presence	transcendence as ubiquitous in everyday life; transcendental identification in consciousness;* transcendental emergence (creativity)	unconditional love; transcendental holism or teamwork; synchronicity	spontaneous right-action (transcendental agency); practical mysticism; dialectically universalized synchronicity	spirituality as a necessary condition of every-day life; universal self-realization	**enchantment*** – being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred; generalized hermeneutics and semiotics; enhanced human perception and hermeneutical powers	(awakening of) **non-duality** being being (cosmic consciousness, at-homeness); human creative powers unbound (the unlimited self)

* Introduced in TDCR but not nearly so fully thematized and argued for.

Note: This is a modified version of M. Hartwig, 'Introduction', *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. M. Hartwig (London: Routledge, 2007), Table 1, pp. xvi–xvii. 'Moments' are the phases of the philosophical system as they develop diachronically. 'Stadia' are the fundamental features of the ontological–axiological chain, or the self-structuration of being, as apprehended in the system. Why they are designated 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A, 6R and 7A/Z is explained in M. Hartwig, 'MELD', *Dictionary*, Hartwig (ed.), pp 295–303. Apart from the fact that 7A/Z and 6R are both elaborated by PMR, it will be seen that the individual stadia of this schema (columns) correspond to the (main emphasis of) the developing moments of the system (rows). This means that (to take the example of PMR), in thinking being *primarily* as non-duality, PMR necessarily also thinks it as enchantment, spirituality, right-action, love, creativity and identity-in-difference; and so on for the other moments. The main emphasis or focus of each moment is indicated in bold, and may be taken as indicating the chief aporia in the previous phase that it remedies.

Table 2 The philosophical discourse of modernity and the critical realist and metaRealist critique

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM)		*The Critical Realist and MetaRealist Critique*		
Moment of PDM	**Defining characteristics**	**Corresponding CR/PMR concepts and critique**	**Moment of CR/PMR**	**Main stadion and concept(s): understanding being as**
Classical modernism (CM)	(1) ego-, anthropo-centricity or -centrism, etc. (atomism) (2) abstract universality (actualism, irrealism) (both underpinned by the epistemic fallacy) 'the intrinsic exterior'	the self as social and interrelated at a fundamental level with the cosmos; dialectical universality	TR	1M non-identity; being as structured, differentiated and changing; holy trinity: judgemental rationality, epistemic relativism, ontological realism
High modernism (HM)	(3) incomplete totality (critique of CM) (follows from (2)) (4) lack of reflexivity (critique of CM) (follows from (3))	open totality, reflexivity; critiques HM's substitutionism, elitism, reductive materialism	CN	2E process, including absence or negativity and contradiction; emergence; irreducibility of mind

(*Continued*)

Table 2—continued

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM)		*The Critical Realist and MetaRealist Critique*		
Moment of PDM	**Defining characteristics**	**Corresponding CR/PMR concepts and critique**	**Moment of CR/PMR**	**Main stadion and concept(s) understanding being as**
Modernisation theory and practice (M)	(5) unilinearity (5′) judgementalism (5″) disenchantment	multilinearity, open systems; dialogue; (re-) enchantment	EC	3L totality; internal relationality, holistic causality, explanatory critique
Postmodernism (PM)	(6) formalism and (6′) functionalism (critique of PDM, stressing identity and difference, and rejecting universality) (7) materialism (critique of PDM)	accepts difference but reinstates unity or (dialectical) universality (connection) and critiques PM's judgemental irrationalism and lack of a concept of emancipation	DCR	4D transformative agency, reflexivity, emancipatory axiology, unity-in-diversity

Triumphalism and endism/ renascent fundamentalism (T/F)	(8) ontological monovalence (a purely positive account of reality, denegating change)	ontological polyvalence, the reality of absence; accentuated critique of materialism (implicit consciousness pervades being); critique of subject–object duality; false absolute of market and other fundamentalisms	TDCR	5A spirituality the absolute (God); universal self-realisation; co-presence; transcendence
			PMR	6R enchantment, being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred 7A/Z non-duality (primacy of unity and identity over difference) or the absolute (ground-state and cosmic envelope) – infinite or unending possibility; generalised co-presence; transcendence

Note: Columns should be read vertically (developmentally), such that (broadly) T/F > PM > M > HM > CM, and PMR > TDCR > DCR > EC > CN > TR.

Table 3 Key concepts of PMR mapped to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR > CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/ CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/ PMR*
Thinking being	as *such and in general*	as *process* + as for 1M	as *a whole* + as for 2E	as *praxis* + as for 3L	as *spiritual* + as for 4D	as *enchanted* + as for 5A	as *non-dual* + as for 6R
Form of reflexivity – immanent critique of PDM + CR	classical modernism	high modernism + 1M	modernization theory + 1M, 2E	postmodernism + 1M, 2E, 3L	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A	
Key PMR concepts	underlying identity-in-difference (implicitly conscious) – ground-state and cosmic envelope (the absolute, non-duality, metaReality) as	transcendence as ubiquitous in everyday life; transcendental identification in consciousness; transcendental emergence (creativity); accentuation	unconditional love; transcendental holism or teamwork; unification, unity; reciprocity, synchronicity; generalization of four-planar social	spontaneous right-action (transcendental agency); practical mysticism; dialectically universalized synchronicity	spirituality as a necessary condition of everyday life; fulfilled intentionality; primacy of self-referentiality; universal self-realization	enchantment – being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred; generalized hermeneutics and semiotics; enhanced human perception and	(awakening of) non-duality; being being (cosmic consciousness, at-homeness); human creative powers unbound (the unlimited self); open,

	the truth or ground of reality; the constellational identity or unity of non-duality and duality; generalized co-presence	of creative power of thought	being to include mental and emotional *sui generis* realities			hermeneutical powers, direct consciousness-to-consciousness causality	unending evolution
Modes or forms of transcendence (non-dual components of action)	*transcendental consciousness* (supramental; at or of the ground-state)	*transcendental identification* (feature of consciousness; becoming one in being)	*transcendental teamwork* or holism (feature of agency; becoming one in or in the context of one's agency)	*transcendental agency* (feature of agency; becoming one in or in the context of one's agency)	*transcendental retreat* into self-identity (feature of consciousness; becoming one in being)	*transcendental identification* and *agency*	*transcendental consciousness*
Direction of transcendence	ground of 1–4	1. outwards, onto (away from subjectivity into objectivity – loss of self)	4. with	3. on, at or in (absorption in activity)	2. inwards, into (away from objectivity into subjectivity – loss of the object)	1–4	ground of 1–4

(*Continued*)

Table 3—continued

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR > CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/ CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/ PMR*
Modes of transcendental consciousness	transcendental or supramental consciousness at or of the ground-state	mindlessness (form without content: absence of content; bliss-consciousness)		mindfulness (content without form: repletion of content) → spontaneous right-action → mindlessness			
Principles of spirituality	self-referentiality or hermeticism (primacy of)	simultaneity	complementarity	practical mysticism	radical hermeticism (primacy of self-referentiality entails the liberation and flourishing of all beings)		

Qualities of the ground-state	transcendental ground	transcendental emergence	transcendental identification or union	transcendental agency	transcendental reflection	transcendental perception	awakening of non-duality
Human ground-state (*dharmic*) capacities	*will* unbound energy or potential; freedom (the capacity to do one thing rather than another)	*creativity* freedom as absenting constraints (negative completion)	*love*	*right-action*	*fulfilled intentionality* or self-realization or enlightenment (positive completion)	*enchantment*	*awakening* of non-duality universal fulfilment or peace
Conditions for self-realization	being in your ground-state or *dharma* (absence of atomistic ego)	clear mind, single-pointedness; mindlessness or innocence	pure heart	balanced body	absence of belief in the brute physicality of the world	enchantment	awakening
Elements of the human creative process (action)	will (initial impulse or calling)	creation (emergence) thought/ unthought	formation, shaping feeling or emotion	making (physical action and objectification)	fulfilled or realized intentionality (reflection of objectification to the maker)	enchanted resonance of fulfilled intentionality	awakening to the non-dual ground of fulfilled intentionality (self- and god-realization)

(*Continued*)

Table 3—continued

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR > CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/ CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/ PMR*
Dialectic of learning	enfolded or implicit knowledge	discovery and recall or anamnesis (emergence of enfolded knowledge)	shaping (binding knowledge back into our innermost being – self-formation) and elaborating it)	objectifying knowledge in practice	reflection or fulfilment		
Circles of human love	1. self	2. another human	3. all humans	4. all beings	5. the absolute		
Cosmogony (cycle of creativity of being as such, eventually perhaps repeating)	polyvalent foundational impulse (unbound energy from implicit potential enfolded in absence)	creation (transcendental emergence)	formation, shaping	making (objectification)	fulfilled intentionality of the foundational impulse (reflection of objectification back to the creator)	enchanted resonance of fulfilled intentionality	universal awakening of non-duality (self- and god-realization); open, on-going

Cosmotheogeny (cycle of cosmic creation, eventually perhaps repeating*)	self-creation of the creator ex nihilo†	emergence of realm of duality, becoming and time	emergence of realm of demi-reality	individual self-realization (commencement of return cycle‡ from alienation)	individual and universal self-realization or eudaimonia (theosis or heaven on earth); the elimination of demi-reality	individual god-realization (oneness with totality)	universal god-realization; open, ongoing; the elimination of relative reality

† Corresponding to the descent of consciousness in traditional cosmotheogenesis, and to Big Bang in modern cosmological theory

‡ Corresponding to the ascent of consciousness in traditional cosmotheogenesis

* Corresponding to cycles from Big Bang to Big Crunch in modern cosmological theory

Note. 7A/Z > 6R > 5A > 4D > 3L > 2E > 1M, so that 7A/Z constellationally contains all the rest.

Table 4 Key moments and figures of PMR mapped to the CR domains of reality

Domains of Reality	*Real*	*Actual*	*Empirical/Conceptual*
	experiences, concepts and signs *events* ***mechanisms***	*experiences, concepts and signs* ***events*** *[mechanisms]*	***experiences, concepts and signs*** *[events]* *[mechanisms]*
REALMS OF REALITY	ABSOLUTE REALITY the enfolded, the implicit (the implicate order); fields of implicitly conscious possibility	RELATIVE REALITY the unfolded, the explicit (the explicate order)	DEMI-REALITY the falsely unfolded
SOCIAL PRINCIPLE	**love** and **peace**	**struggle**	**war**, control
PHILOSOPHY	**metaReality**	**critical realism**	**irrealism**
ONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE	**truth**	**realism**	**irrealism**
META-PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE (1)	**non-duality** (identity, identification, unity) (a property of consciousness)	**duality** (non-identity, without alienation but with the potential for it)	**dualism** (alienation)
META-PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE (2)	**truth** (most basically the revelation of identity)	**non-identity**	**mis-identification, error, falsity**
ORIENTATION TO BEING	**being being**	**thinking being**	**evading being**

SUBJECTIVITY–OBJECTIVITY RELATION	**unity-in-diversity**	**expressive unity**	**disremption** (alienation)
DIMENSIONS OF THE SELF	**transcendental** or alethic **self** or ground-state (a field of possibility)	**embodied self**	**ego** (a real illusion)
FORMS OF ENCHANTMENT	**enchantment**	**re-enchantment**	**disenchantment** (emergent false level or ideology)
FORMS OF FREEDOM	**peace** (dialectically = universal fulfilment)	**freedom to** (lessening of positive incompleteness or the absence of total development)	**freedom from** (elimination of negative incompleteness or heteronomous determinations)
MODES OF FREEDOM AND UNFREEDOM (non-alienation and alienation)	**autonomy** (identity – true for, to and of itself)	**unity**	**alienation**
FORM OF IDEOLOGY (demi-reality)	**underlying generative falsity** (alethic falsity)	**practical**	**theoretical**
FORM OF ALIENATION (demi-reality)	**self-alienation**	**practical**	**conceptual**
LOGIC OF MASTER–SLAVERY (demi-reality)	**exploitation**	**conditionality** of transactions	**desire** (as dominant motivation)
PATHS TO UNION WITH TOTALITY (a tri-unity)	**truth** (*jnana* yoga)	**practice** (*karma* yoga)	**love** (*bhakti* yoga)
THE HOLY TRINITY OF CRITICAL REALISM	**ontological realism**	**epistemic relativity**	**judgemental rationality**

(*Continued*)

Table 4—continued

Domains of Reality	*Real*	*Actual*	*Empirical/Conceptual*
MODES IN WHICH ABSOLUTE REALITY SUSTAINS, IS CONNECTED WITH, AND IS ACCESSED IN, THE WORLD OF DUALITY			
FORMS OF UNITY OR IDENTITY (modes in which non-duality sustains duality)	**ground** or basis (ground-state, cosmic envelope)	**mode of constitution** (or reproduction/transformation) via transcendence	**fine structure** or deep interior† of all aspects of being
MECHANISMS OF IDENTIFICATION (modes of connection of non-duality)	**co-presence** (a property of all beings)	**reciprocity** (a property of animate beings)	**transcendental identification** (a property of consciousness)

DYNAMIC OR EVOLUTIONARY FORM OF MECHANISMS OF IDENTIFICATION (modes of connection of non-duality)	**attraction** (integrated rhythmics)	**synthesis** (of spatio-temporally spread phenomena)	**economy** (generalized synchronicity or unfolding, inwardizing englobement)
FORMS OF TRANSCENDENCE	**transcendental consciousness** at or of the ground-state	**transcendental agency** or transcendental identification in agency (solo or teamwork)	**transcendental identification** in consciousness

† Fine structure pertains to the empirical/conceptual domain because it is implicit (ground-state) consciousness and can be experienced as such. It pertains equally to the domain of the real. This concept is not deployed in *Reflections on MetaReality*; it is introduced in the present volume at p. xiv.

Note. Correspondences are sometimes loose, particularly in the case of those between domains and realms of reality: each of the realms have real, actual and empirical/conceptual dimensions. The items in bold in the rows after the first can be arranged in a triplex structure in exactly the same way as in the first row (for further exemplification, see Bhaskar and Hartwig 2010, Table 17, p. 115). Lowermost (primary) levels can then be seen to constellationally embrace upper (secondary) levels, hence to have ontological, epistemological and logical priority over them – the priority of the enfolded over the unfolded, the possible over the actual. Where upper levels, which thus presuppose primary levels, embody categorial error and ignorance, they function to occlude lower levels. Square-bracketed levels are not given in the concept of levels without square brackets but are presupposed by it.

Part One

The Development of Critical Realism

Chapter One

From a Philosophy of Science to a Philosophy of Universal Self-realisation*

Part I: From Science to Freedom

It is a real pleasure to be here with you in Mumbai and to be the guest of this institute. What I want to do is to talk this morning and tomorrow about the progressive development of critical realism starting out from a concern with science, through various stages, to a concern with questions of human realisation and ultimately universal self-realisation. There are five stages, as I understand it, in the development of critical realism. It started out as a philosophy of science, a critique of positivism but also of neo-Kantianism and radical philosophers of science like Kuhn and Feyerabend who said many shocking things which have also been resumed in postmodernist discourse today. That I call *transcendental realism*. Then it moved on to *critical naturalism* and concerned itself with the dispute between naturalists and anti-naturalists, between positivism and hermeneutics, and it tried to resolve this dispute. Basically it was oriented against the dualisms that beset social theory in the mid- to late 1970s

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* Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, 1 December 2000.

and still to a large extent do today. Those are the two things that I will concentrate on today, that is problems in the philosophy and methodology of science, but particularly leading on to social science. Tomorrow I will go through the next three phases of critical realism, which I will briefly mention today. The third stage in critical realism broke down one particular dichotomy, characteristic of the dualisms of social science, which was very popular and insistent particularly in western thought: that one could not move from a factual statement or any set of factual statements to a value judgement. This prohibition was called Hume's law, and I argued that one could move from facts to values. And I did this through what I called the *theory of explanatory critique*. This then provided the lynchpin by means of which I moved from a concern with science to a concern with questions of values and human freedom and emancipation. The fourth stage of the development was a dialectical one in which I developed a system which I called *dialectical critical realism*, which went into dialectical notions such as absence, totality, negativity and so on. In the latest stage of my work I have gone on to questions of the convergence of east and west liberatory thought around what could be loosely called a spiritual dimension. This I have called *transcendental dialectical critical realism*. Those later stages, particularly the dialectical and the spiritual turns within critical realism, I will be dealing with later. Here I will mainly be talking about science and social science.

So how did critical realism start off? It started off really as an account of science which critiqued the seeming incapacity of philosophies of science to really say anything about the world. As Professor Singh has mentioned I was initially a practical economist and I wanted to do a thesis on the relevance of economic theory to underdeveloped countries. And it seemed to me to be very difficult to do this in a rational manner because most philosophy as we have it today embodied presuppositions about the nature of the world which were so obviously false that we have no guidelines for any sort of assessment of the relevance of economic theory to the problems of developing countries. So I had to go back to what was probably my first love, intellectually, that was philosophy. What I found was that existing philosophy of

science, in the mid- and late 60s, when I started work on the movement of thought which eventually became critical realism, really pivoted on a central theory, that is the Humean theory of causal laws. This was a theory that the natural world was governed by causal laws which were understood as empirical regularities, that was as constant conjunctions of events. This theory underpinned the very fashionable Popper/Hempel model of explanation. I think you are probably all familiar with this, this is still the orthodoxy. It is called the deductive nomological model of explanation and it says that to explain an event you subsume it under a set of initial conditions and a set of covering laws; that is how you effect explanation. Now those covering laws are empirical regularities, constant conjunctions of events, Humean empirical regularities. This pivotal Humean theory of causal laws finds its way into very radical approaches to social science. For example Habermas, in describing in his theory of our three constitutive interests in knowledge, our knowledge-constitutive interest in prediction and control, presupposes a world which can be described and explained in a Popperian/Hempelian way. That account of reality informs his understanding of nature. Even without going to Habermas' standard anti-naturalist account of social science the dominant hermeneutical accounts of the 70s and 80s all took a very broad contrast and argued for the categorial differentiation of social science, the absolute differentiation of social science from natural science, because they believed that the natural world was described by constant conjunctions of events.

We can see this if we take what was a very influential text book in the 70s which was Winch's *Idea of a Social Science*. His argument was that social phenomena could not be understood in the same way as natural phenomena but instead had to be understood in terms of the rule-governed linguistic paradigm that Wittgenstein had enunciated in his *Philosophical Investigations*. This led to two things, and there are essentially only two main arguments in his book. One is that constant conjunctions of events, that is empirical regularities, were neither necessary, as Weber had argued, nor sufficient for understanding social life. This was achieved in an entirely different way, namely by the

discovery of intelligible links in its subject matter. You could certainly say that that is what we are concerned to do in social science, namely to discover intelligible links. But of course the idea that natural science is just concerned with the search for constant conjunctions is completely false, as I will go on to show in a moment. But it was tacitly presupposed and it provided the grounds for Winch's contrast. His second argument for the specificity of the social and the categorial differentiation of the social and natural sciences turned on the fact that social things, as distinct from physical things, have no existence apart from our conceptualisation of them. That of course is quite true, and that marks, at least in the first instance, a major difference between social and natural scientific methodology. But when he came to give his positive account of how social science was done we find there the displacement of themes from positivist philosophy of science. Thus rules function as a normative displacement of empirical regularities and the assumption is that conceptualisations which are ordered in a rule-like way completely exhaust the subject mater of social science and that they are more or less incorrigible. So there is nothing for social science other than investigating the way that agents understand their own subject matter as intelligible, and furthermore, that social science must accept the way that the social agents interpret their own subject matter as incorrigible. Those were assumptions or theses that I want to take issue with. So that is really why I felt that it was very important to come to terms with the Humean theory of causality.

So what we do in philosophy is that we start from phenomena, as in any other subject matter. You cannot just say something is false, you cannot just juxtapose in philosophy your idea of the world with something like the world. What you have to do is engage in an immanent critique of some existing conceptualisation or theory of the world. You have to engage in a reassessment of something which your protagonist thinks is pivotal and which you can show he has given a wrong account of.

Now there was one thing that positivism and positivists, empiricists and neo-Kantians all agreed was crucial to science, and that was experience. Experience, and more particularly experimental activity, is the heart of the empiricists' account of science.

Actually I did not disagree with this, but whether I did or did not, on the method of immanent critique that had to be my starting point. What I did was try to show that experimental activity actually presupposes a different ontology or account of the world. So let us see how this would work out. What the experimental scientist does in the laboratory is to artificially generate a closure of what is essentially an open system, in order to identify the working of a single generative mechanism or causal complex, a single process,[1] or complex, totality or field, whatever the object of study, in isolation from the influence of other factors. Only when he has effected that closure experimentally can he identify an empirical invariance. This means that what he is looking for, the object of scientific investigation, is not a surface pattern of events, because the surface pattern of events in natural life is chaotic. We do not actually find empirical invariances anywhere in the world happening spontaneously. The whole point of experimental activity is to generate an empirical invariance. Now if it is artificially produced, then we have to ask: is it that all man is doing in the experimental laboratory is discovering something he himself produced? The answer is of course not. Because what he or she is trying to do is isolate a structure, a causal complex, a process which will work independently of that closure, independently of whether he artificially closes the system or not. In virtue of that he can then apply it to the open systemic world where it will act in co-determination with a multiplicity of other factors, a multiplicity of other mechanisms, a multiplicity of other agencies. To give you an example, the law of gravity is operating on me now but I am not falling to the ground, it is operating tendentially, it is one of the factors that go to explain why I am sitting relatively stationary. It is actually not operating empirically, it is operating at a supra-empirical level, what I call *transfactually*, as one of the tendencies which are operating on me now. If you wanted to do a test of the law of gravity we would have to set up a laboratory situation and then measure the rate at which a heavy object falls to the ground. That we can only do in a few special contexts.

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[1] I entirely agree with Professor Singh in wanting to accentuate process.

This had a very important implication because it does mean that what the scientist is doing is searching for something *behind* the pattern of events which generates them, whether or not we have a closure of that system of events—irrespective of the human activity which discovers it. So what I did was to argue that the field or the domain of the real is greater, more encompassing than the field of the actual, which describes the pattern of events; and that in turn is greater than the field of the empirical, which describes the pattern of events that we actually apprehend. Because clearly there would be things, and there would be events, actual phenomena, even if humanity was not here to observe it, even if one particular agent was not here to observe it, or there was no agent to observe it—there would still be patterns in the world. The differentiation between the real, the actual and the empirical was a big break with empiricist ontology. As was the view of causal laws as the workings of generative structures, causal mechanisms and processes; that is, as being tendencies, tendencies which could be possessed without being exercised, which could be exercised without being realised, which could be realised without being manifest in a one to one way with any set of phenomena, and which also could be manifest without being detected or identified by men, that is by humanity. This was a radically new account of causality and it led to a completely different ontology.

It led to a view of the world as stratified, differentiated and changing as distinct from the implicit, Humean empirical realist ontology which informed almost all philosophy of science since at least the days of Hume. It was there in Kant, also in Hegel in his account of nature, but probably goes back far longer than Hume, perhaps back to Aristotle in the west, and it was certainly there as the general assumption of philosophers of science in the 60s and 70s. So we had—through this analysis of experimental activity and a similar analysis of the conditions of possibility of applied activity, that is, of what happens when we apply science in the open systemic world where we find that exactly the same categorial distinctions are presumed—a radically different account of the world.

However, at a meta-level it was very difficult to say this, because Hume and more especially Kant had declared a taboo on ontology. To use Wittgenstein's words, all we could do in philosophy was talk about what he called the net, the net of language, the network, the framework—not what the network described. In other words we could not talk directly about the world. Now it seemed to me pretty obvious that any claim about knowledge must tacitly presuppose something about the objects of knowledge. But that is not in itself a very strong argument so what our transcendental argument from experimental activity had done was to actually ask the Kantian question: what must be the case for sense experience, in its specific form of experimental activity, to be possible? But it had come to a radically non-Kantian conclusion that the *world* must be structured. Kant, you will remember, had talked about the structure within us and the way in which we, as scientists, imposed the categories and schematisms on the empirical manifold. So there was structure inside, but of what there was outside us, we could not say anything at all. The best we could say was that there was a thing in itself.

This taboo on ontology is still very strong. I call that taboo the epistemic fallacy. Let us look at some of its manifestations today. In postmodernism, in discourse theory, there is a general assumption that all you can do is talk about talk. It is most clearly explicit in the work of discourse theorists like Ernesto Laclau, but it is there in Derrida in a slightly different form, it is there in others associated with poststructuralism and postmodernism. So discourse becomes a kind of intertextuality, a kind of relating of one text to another text or talk. But what you have to do is ask what is the status of that talk: *is the talk real or not?* If the talk is not real then it can have no causal effect, then you have to ask what is the point of the talk at all. If the talk is admitted to be real, then you can re-refer to it; if the talk is to be intelligible it must be possible for that talk, that statement, that discourse, to become an object of a subsequent act of reference. We must be able to refer to what we have said again, and if we can refer to what we have said again, then there is at least one real object in the world. That is talk. So that is the thin edge of the wedge:

because once you accept the reality of discourse, of talk, then you can accept the reality of a referent for any discourse, just a straight first-order referent. So when I am talking about a table or when I am talking about culture, there is a referent in the real world which is that which I talk about. In the language of semiotics, what we have is not only the signifier, the talk, and the signified, the meaning or the concept, but we have the referent, the thing or object talked about by the word or words, and so we have the *semiotic triangle*. What the postmodernists and many structuralists and post-structuralists did was to leave out the referent. What realists tried to do was to put the referent back in.

This mistake of discourse theory is sometimes corrected by saying, well of course we admit there is the thing in itself, but there is no way to describe or get at it except by talk. So what is the point of having an ontology, because after all anything that you know you know under a particular description. That is fine. There are two ways to take this line of thought further. The first is this—it has often been said to me, by postmodernists and discourse theorists: of course we do not deny that there are things in themselves, and nor would I deny that there are things like stones, because you do not need to conceptualise them. But then I said to them, well, if you accept the reality of stones then why will you not accept the reality of the molecules and atoms that constitute them, why won't you accept the reality of the universe that englobes them. The thin edge of the wedge has already been made, once you can say anything about the world then you are into ontology. The question then is not whether or not to do ontology. The question is whether your ontology is correct or not, which means whether it is adequate to your subject matter.

Another line that postmodernists and discourse theorists, contemporary deniers of ontology, will take is the more classical Kantian response, which is to say well, this is all just anthropic, something which is happening subjectively within myself. So let us look at Kant from that standpoint. Kant as you know had a view, contrary to Hume, that our knowledge was structured, and actually the neo-Kantians of the late 60s and 70s like Popper, Hanson, Harré, Hesse and so on (as did the more radical post-

Kantians, Feyerabend and Kuhn) also had the same view. Now in its classical, Kantian form the structuration of knowledge occurs through the imposition of the categories. Now what was it that applied the categories to the empirical manifold sensed in sense experience, what was it that did the schematisms that made empirical science possible as a structured totality? It was the transcendental ego. And what was the status of the transcendental ego? For Kant it was unknowable: it was a thing in itself. But surely, if knowledge was real then that which made the knowledge had to be real. So that is the great aporia, that was the great weakness, the great problem with Kantianism is the fact that it hangs on an unknowable thing in itself *inside*. Not only is there an unknowable thing in itself outside, the whole system is posited on a transcendental ego or self which is the unknowable synthesiser of the empirical manifold. So ultimately the structure collapses in on itself. And something like that tendency of thought happens within all forms of neo-Kantianism and all systems of thought which take their lead from Kant.

Now let us revert to the main thread of my argument. There were many philosophers of science around that time who were having problems with orthodox philosophy of science. They were saying it leaves something out, it leaves out the way in which reality is pictured in the scientific imagination, the creative imagination of the scientists. So that certainly empirical invariances cannot be *sufficient* for a scientific theory. But what I was arguing was not only was it not sufficient, but it was not even *necessary*, because it was in fact false. It was false that the world was constituted by constant conjunctions of events—false, because they did not actually occur. This was a much more radical break and it gave us a structured world *out there* and a structured world *in here*, in the scientific community, knowledge was structured and that reflected in some way the stratification of the world.

Thus, one of the first and most fundamental theorems of transcendental realism, after the categorial distinctiveness of the real, the actual and the empirical, and the analysis of laws as tendencies, was the distinction between what I called then the intransitive dimension and the transitive dimension. More simply between ontology and epistemology, between the world and

knowledge. And what I argued for was that ontological realism was quite compatible with epistemological relativism, pluralism, diversity and indeed fallibilism. This is what neo-Kantians have got right: knowledge was a social process, but it was a social process which was designed to capture the ever deeper stratification of the world.

To show the sort of problem that philosophers of science in those days got into because they did not have a concept of the world, let us take Kuhn and Feyerabend. They formulated what was known as the problem of incommensurability. What was this problem? What they noted was that Newtonian theory and Einsteinian theory were so radically different in their conceptual structures that they shared no meanings in common. If they shared no meanings in common there was no way to compare them. So that is why they said they were 'incommensurable'. This seemed to make science a process of irrational breaks or splits—that was actually how Kuhn formulated it, though he did it in a sociologically sophisticated way. Now let us see how a critical realist might approach this phenomenon of incommensurability. The critical realist does not deny the phenomenon at all, but by adding to that level of *epistemological relativism*, the levels of *ontological realism* and *judgmental rationalism*, the second and third levels of what we could call the holy trinity of transcendental realism as an account of science, it resolves the problem. First of all, the very formulation of the problem of incommensurability presupposes common referentiality, that there is an object world in common. No one bothers to say that physics and cricket are incommensurable or that Newtonian theory is incommensurable with classical music. Why? Because they are not describing the same world; intuitively you know that Newton and Einstein are describing the same world, describing the same phenomena. The problem however still remains that the way they describe it is radically different. So is it the case then that we have no grounds for preferring Einsteinian theory to Newtonian theory? No. What we can do is formulate a very simple criterion. We can say that Einsteinian theory is superior to Newtonian theory because Einsteinian theory can explain in *its* descriptions almost all or all the phenomena that Newtonian theory can explain under *its* descriptions *plus*

some phenomena that Newtonian theory cannot explain. That is actually the case. There are very few phenomena that we actually know, only about eight or nine test situations in which Newtonian theory comes unstuck in its terms. But Einsteinian theory can explain them in its terms. So we have a purely quantitative criterion for preferring Einsteinian to Newtonian theory.

This goes against something which is a very widespread assumption of western thought, which is that basically we do not really have any grounds for anything in life. Any grounds for belief. This is something which is resumed, though in a more sophisticated way, by postmodernists and others. Let us take a classic formulation of it. Hume said we have no grounds for not preferring the destruction of the world to my little finger. That is extraordinary. If it is the case that there are no grounds for not preferring the destruction of the whole world to my little finger then there must be something very wrong with philosophy. But there was certainly something wrong with Hume's example because the little finger is of course included within the whole world. So he could have saved the rest of his body by preferring the destruction of his little finger. What he was tacitly doing was detotalising, extruding himself from the rest of the world, alienating himself from the rest of the world, setting himself off against the rest of the world. This is a categorial tendency in philosophy which we will come to tomorrow. Another example of this, he said really, when you think of it, there are no grounds for leaving a building by the ground floor door rather than by the second floor window. But of course we do have very good grounds. Once we know the Newtonian theory of gravity we know why it is we fall to the ground, other things being equal. Even common sense and experience give us inductive grounds for that belief. This trinity of ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism allows us to sustain say the postmodernists' grasp on difference, the processual, the geo-historical, diversity and change, all of which are quite true, with ontological realism, that is, a belief in the existence of a reality which does not depend on our subjective interpretations of it and with judgmental rationality, that is, with the idea that we have better or worse grounds for belief or action. So we begin to sustain, through

the concepts of objectivity and truth, the possibility of better or worse grounds for beliefs and social practices, and hence we can eventually sustain the possibility of the project of human emancipation.

Transcendental realism had marked out a dialectic of scientific discovery, in which at each moment of time, science was seen as a kind of snapshot of what is essentially a process in motion. The nature of this process was always moving from the description of a domain of phenomena, a level of reality, to the underlying structures, mechanisms or processes which would explain it. This scientists did by the creative imagination of models of structures which, *if* they existed and acted in the way they imagined, would explain the phenomena which occurred. By rigorous empirical controls and tests they eventually eliminated all but one structure or causal complex. When they got to the point where they could actually empirically identify and describe that structure or complex, they then moved on to discover the deeper structure, field or totality that explained it. Thus we saw science as a process in motion, of reaching out to ever deeper levels of reality and building ever greater totalities. It gave us a different account of science, as engaged in the search for ever deeper structures or wider totalities which were relatively or absolutely independent of scientists, which would help to explain the phenomena they observed at some more superficial level.

One interesting consequence of the analysis of causal laws and the objects of scientific thought as tendencies of structures, was that we had to accept that powers, tendencies, liabilities, fields, capacities and so on were all real. Ontologically, epistemologically and logically this meant the possible was real and more important to science than the actual. So it reversed, as it were, the priorities between the possible and the actual. That is what I called *dispositional realism*. But another consequence of it was also very important and this I called *categorial realism*. It is obviously part of the logic of transcendental realism that the world is really there outside, transfactually efficaciously operating independently of the working scientist, or relatively independently, as we have to say when we come to domains like quantum physics. Now if that is the case, then what are we to say about causality, or

about space, time, process, totality? Are they real or not? The philosophers really from Aristotle, but particularly Kant and more recently Popper, have thought of categories as subjective classifications of the mind imposed on the phenomena or the empirical manifold. But transcendental realism said categories were real, they were out there, for example the world really was tensed, well, the social world was at least. Causality was really there, part of the general furniture of the world. So we had a categorial realism. It is obviously absurd, when you think of it, not to accept categorial realism. Because what would be the point of saying that Ohm's law and all the other laws known to physics and chemistry are real but not lawfulness as such? That would be like saying, OK, we have knives, forks. and spoons but we do not have cutlery because cutlery is a higher order concept. Or it would be like saying we have rupee notes, 10, 20, 50, 100 rupee notes, but we do not have the money system as such because money is a category.

Now if you regard philosophy as having as its subject matter the categories, then this means that philosophy becomes important. And if you are a working scientist and you are working with, thinking reality in terms of, an inadequate categorial framework, sooner or later if not necessarily you, then someone who is applying your work, will fall into a theory practice inconsistency. Let us assume that you understand in your practice that laws are transfactual, that they are not empirical regularities, but you still have in your mind the idea that they are empirical regularities, then you are really going to have a false account of what you do. This is theory–practice inconsistency or what some writers have called performative contradiction.

Now we come to what I think is the most general criterion of philosophy, that is *reflexivity*, the capacity of an account to adequately situate and sustain itself. Typically most philosophers themselves fall into theory–practice inconsistency. Let us go back to the working scientist; what he is actually doing in his practice is to presuppose something that, in his intellectual theory, he is denying. That gives us a very interesting figure, the figure of, if you like, ideology or false consciousness going along with right practice. What I want to say, and to show, is that even if you deny

ontology, you are still implicitly assuming it, you are implicitly assuming the truth of ontology. If you are an empiricist you are still a realist, you are an empirical realist. This is what I called the TINA aspect (TINA standing for There Is No Alternative); there is no alternative to ontology, there is no alternative to realism. Even more so, we see from the example of the working scientist there is no alternative to an assumption of the world as transfactually efficacious. That is, there is no alternative to tacitly presupposing the nature of reality as it is. There is no alternative to the truth, at whatever level it informs your practice, if your practice is to be efficacious. So this is a very important figure that we have hit upon now. This figure of the necessary presupposition by what is false of something that is true, for it to have causal efficacy. It plays a great role in the idea of social science and philosophy as having liberatory or emancipatory powers. Because one way a philosophy or a social science can be liberatory is by getting rid of that illusion, that false account, and so result in greater consistency and great reflexivity. If you have a theory-practice inconsistency then you are sooner or later going to fall into error. That is why it is important; and this is how philosophy can come to inform science and social science. That is really all I want to say about the philosophy of science—except to say that in my first book, *A Realist Theory of Science*,[2] I did ask: but how do you explain all this? Ultimately, I hinted, that you had to explain it in terms of the dominance of certain paradigms. Certainly the Cartesian paradigm of action by contact. Then also in terms of the celestial closures that Newtonian physics had achieved, though these were geo-historically locally specific closed contexts. And finally in terms of an underlying model of man. This underlying model of man was essentially a very superficial one, which I will come on to talk about tomorrow. Because I want to argue for a very different conception of man, a deep, more essentialist conception of man in which the subjectivity of man himself, not just the world out there, is structured, differentiated and changing.

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[2] Leeds 1975, London 1997.

Let us see how we can apply this understanding of science to methodological issues and debates within the social sciences. When I first started to go into the philosophy of social science I found that it was rife with disputes and dichotomies. The biggest dichotomy was definitely that between naturalism and anti-naturalism, between positivism and hermeneutics, but there was also a dichotomy between individualists and holists, a dichotomy between the proponents of structure and the proponents of agency, there was dichotomy between mind and body, there was dichotomy between reason and cause, there was a dichotomy between fact and value, and also between theory and practice.

The main question in the dispute between naturalists and anti-naturalists was about understanding social phenomena. Do we understand them in the same way as natural phenomena? Now the critical naturalist argument was that of course social phenomena would be different, but there would be no difference in principle in that we would still have the essential movement of science from a superficial phenomenon that you have identified to a deeper understanding or explanation of it. But this would have to be grounded in what was *emergent* in society and man from nature. Because it is clear that we are material things, so we are still governed by the laws of physics and chemistry and biology, but there are also emergent properties of human beings and social phenomena. Let us take the idea of the structure or a causal mechanism or a process. What we have to ask is: what are the distinguishing features of these structures or structure-analogues in the social world?

One thing is that obviously they are very dependent on human activity, very immediately, in a way in which they are not in the natural world, unless we go to very deep physics. So they are *activity dependent*. Secondly they are obviously *concept dependent*; these structures do not exist without some sort of conception that the agents have. This does not mean they have to have a concept of the structure, because they may know nothing about the structure but the structure could not operate without the agent's activity, and the agent's activity would not be a human activity unless it was also conceptualised. So conceptuality is clearly a distinguishing feature like (and derivative from) intentional

activity dependence in the subject matter of social science. But contrary to the claims of the hermeneutical tradition, that conceptuality did not exhaust the subject matter of the social sciences. Everything in the social world was concept dependent but not everything in the social world was a concept. Nor did something else follow from what was generally taken to be the anti-naturalist stance. It did not follow that the agents necessarily had the correct conceptualisation of the social world. Now the third thing that distinguishes the social sciences, or seemed to distinguish their subject matter, was their greater *space–time specificity*, their greater speed, their greater locality. This is only a relative difference because natural phenomena themselves were always in motion, they are in space and time like social phenomena, but the social world seemed faster, more transient. The fourth difference, which I also called the fourth limit on naturalism, was what I called the *critical limit* on naturalism.

This is very important because if we start from the conceptualisations that agents have of the activities in which they are engaged then we have the basis for something which is like a social scientific analogue of transcendental argument. Understanding the necessity for hermeneutical moments in social science gives you a basis for building up theories which answer analogous questions to the transcendental question, what must be the case for these activities, as conceptualised in the experience of the agents whose activities they are, to be possible? And this sort of transcendental argument is very common in social theory, at least in high level social theory. You can find it in Marx's work and Weber's work and Durkheim's work, all the great social theorists. But of course what you have to do when you have understood this hermeneutical moment is to empirically test the theories that you produce through this method of argumentation against empirical data.

Here we come up against a big problem. In the social sciences we do not have decisive test situations, we cannot really do true analogues of natural scientific experiments and we do not find, except in very rare cases, closed systems spontaneously occurring. So this means that the apparent symmetry between explanation and prediction in the natural sciences has no

analogue here. I say it is only apparent because it is only at the superficial level, of the analysis of laws as empirical invariances, that it works. But that apparent symmetry breaks down. The empirical criterion in social science can only be *explanatory*. So we judge one theory better than another theory because it can explain more, not necessarily because it is a better predictor. Now the best predictor, I am talking now from experience in England, the best predictor of the weather tomorrow is that it will be the same as today. But everyone knows the weather in England is always changing. Nevertheless the prediction 'same as today' is better than most meteorological forecasts. Econometricians have a terrible record at predicting economic phenomena but nevertheless few people would say that economics cannot throw light on to tendencies that work in the social world. Very few people, even if they are very critical of neo-classical economics, would not say that when a price rises, other things being equal, there will be a tendency for demand to fall. Other things being equal people will buy a cheaper good of the same quality rather than a more expensive good. That is only a tendency. So unless we have this kind of understanding of laws then you are not going to find any intelligibility in social science. You are going to throw out the baby with the bath water. This then was the essence of my critique of hermeneutics and what I tried to do was provide a more general account of social science which could do justice to both the hermeneutical and the empirical moments and reconcile them in a broader, more totalising theory.

Let me just go through how this approach resolved a few of the other dichotomies which beset the social sciences and still do so to a large extent today. In contrast to the dichotomy between individualism and holism or collectivism I argued for a view of the subject matter of the social sciences as being essentially relational. That is we were not really concerned with individual human beings or collectivities. I was not denying that human beings or that collectivities existed. But the collectivities that the methodological holists at the time talked about were very uninteresting. They were things like crowds at football matches and so on. We can see that they had a very limited conception of true holism. What I argued for was a relational view of the subject

matter of social science which took as their paradigms things like the relationship between husbands and wives, between employers and employed, between coloniser and colonised, between capitalists and workers. On the basis of these relational accounts you could actually start to define more interesting collectivities. To be in the social world is to be the bearer of a relation. It is to be related. This is the *relational* account of the subject matter of social science.

A third major and still ongoing dispute is between the protagonists of structure and the protagonists of agency. There are those philosophers and social scientists who wanted to explain everything in terms of the human agent. This was taken to an extreme in the work of some ethnomethodologists who believed that what basically happens is that when we wake up in the morning we recreate society. When we go to sleep we put society to sleep. Everything is just a result of our own spontaneous action. That is an extreme voluntarism but this voluntaristic tendency is there in the work of Weber and in the work of such social theorists as Rom Harré and Tony Giddens with whom I have a lot in common. What I argued was, against voluntarism, that we never create the social structure, we never create the social circumstances into which we are born. We never create it from scratch, it always pre-exists us. Therefore we must acknowledge the presence of the past, we must acknowledge the presence of the structures which we inherit. We can reproduce and change them as radically as we want or as conditions allow us, but they pre-exist us and that legacy of the past must be acknowledged. At the same time, against those who commit the opposite error to voluntarism, that of reification, these social structures would not be ongoing unless we reproduced them or transformed them in our conscious intentional activity. So we have a view of the social structure pre-existing humanity, but existing only in virtue of our ongoing human activity. This was the basis of the *transformational model of social activity*.

The mind–body problem was a classic case of what happened when a totality—such as ourselves as embodied human beings constituted neither simply by brute matter, nor simply by consciousness but as embodied consciousness and actually not

just mind and body but also feelings, thus as embodied feeling consciousness—is split up into different parts. What I argued for here was what I called *synchronic emergent powers materialism*, that was a view of mind and the other properties irreducible to the laws of physics, chemistry and biology as a genuinely emergent level, a genuinely emergent stratum of reality. This leads on to a fifth dichotomy, which is immediately related to the mind–body one, the reason–cause dispute. Here the general view was that reasons and causes describe different language games. They belong to what Waismann, in the spirit of Wittgenstein, called different language strata. So when we appeal to a reason and a cause we are playing two different games. In that case how can we make sense of any human action? Supposing I turn to Bridget over there and say Bridget, could you raise your hand. She has raised her hand, my speech action gave her a reason for performing a material change. Someone is nodding over there. I have given him a reason for nodding. If you analyse any human action of any sort it involves some sort of mediation by consciousness which has a material effect in the world. So we have to come to terms with the causality of ideas, the causality of reasons. I did this through the theory of *intentional causality*.

Turning to the fact–value dichotomy I have already argued that you can actually derive values from facts and will tomorrow expand on the way we do this. The fact–value dichotomy is also immediately related to the theory–practice dichotomy, the split between theory and practice. We have seen that is something that the social scientist has to overcome by putting himself in the picture he paints. In other words, social science is part of the greater totality it describes, it cannot be excluded from it. I go on in my later works to argue for a systematic view of it being part of the manifesto, part of the charter of social science to actually orient itself to the project of human emancipation. Human emancipation is something that cannot be imposed from without; so it has to be self-emancipation. Social science and science generally, can play a great role in that project. In my dialectical works, such as *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* or *Plato Etc.,* I deepened the transformational model of social activity a bit. The transformational model of social activity was that

conception which allowed us to reconcile structure and agency by seeing how structure pre-existed but continued to exist, or was perpetuated, only in virtue of intentional agency. So now in my dialectical works I have argued that we had to understand social being in terms of four dimensionalities, each of which was necessary for a full understanding of any social event. These were the stratification of the subject or self; our transactions with others, our interpersonal relations; our relationship to the social structure; and our material transactions with nature. These four levels were necessary for the location of any act. And here I talked about *four-planar social being*.

Now what I do believe is that we are profoundly alienated at all four levels of our social being. We are alienated from ourselves, we are alienated from each other, we are alienated from the social structures and we are alienated form the material world. Our alienation from the material world can be witnessed in the ecological problems that humanity is suffering. These ecological problems are so great, and also coupled onto our economic ones, that the very survival of the human species on this planet is at stake. We have all become aware of how globally interconnected we are, the fact that what happens here in Mumbai will affect what is happening in Tokyo and that will effect what happens in Rio de Janeiro. We are one world, a single world. So de-alienation, I am going to argue tomorrow and in the discussions we have today, must be *universal*. And in thinking of this de-alienation we also have to think very profoundly of our own role in that alienation. Because each and every one of us in what we do can make a difference. But we can only make a difference if in some way we are not alienated from ourselves. What I am going to argue tomorrow is that the *self-alienation* of man does not exhaust, but is the root cause of all the other ills that we have.

Now what I argued in my work was that because we were all part of a totality, the same totality, so inevitably, logically, we were all committing ourselves through what I call *dialectical universality* to the project of universal human emancipation.

Let us see how this might go. Suppose you have a desire and you find that desire constrained. Then inexorably you want

to get rid of your constraint. So you must be committed to getting rid of the constraint for all dialectically similar agents. Then you will move to a position in which you want to get rid of all constraints as such in virtue of their dialectical similarity as constraints on the flourishing of human powers, potentialities and possibilities. And this will mean that we are committed, in our action, willy-nilly, just by the merest want or desire (however you start up), purely logically, to the project of removing all social ills. And this in virtue of any human act that we do.

This is a very strong position, and it is one the basic meaning of which can be put as follows: that what we do when we act—this is the strong claim—is to tacitly presuppose (through this logic I have begun to sketch) a society in which, to quote Marx's words here because I believe that the vision would commend itself to everyone, and practically commit ourselves to a society and to a world in which the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all. Of course that was not observed and practiced by those who have tried to produce a communist society, but that vision, that very inspired vision of a society, a world in which the free development of each would be a condition for the free development of all, stresses, places at the heart of the problem, the issue of the *concrete singularity*, the freedom; the respect that we must all give to each other, but also preserves, indeed accentuates, the element of *universalisability*. And what I will argue tomorrow is that self-realisation implies action which is spontaneously oriented to a good society, the removal of all social injustices and ills, and the totality of what I called *master–slave type* or oppressive *relationships*. And moreover, that in fact that starting from the most ordinary desire we end up with a position in which we are committed to the realisation of every being in the cosmos.

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Part II: From Truth to Self-realisation*

Today will really be a continuation of yesterday so I will presuppose most of what I said yesterday, but we will be recapitulating, as we go through the subjects to be discussed today, some of the themes that we developed yesterday. So I hope that people who are here today but weren't yesterday will be able to pick things up.

Briefly to remind you, in these talks I am situating the whole topic of the progressive movement of critical realism from a philosophy of science primarily concerned with knowledge to a philosophy of freedom, human emancipation and ultimately universal self-realisation in the context of the development of critical realism. I mentioned five stages in its development: as a philosophy of science which I called transcendental realism; and a philosophy of social science which I called critical naturalism; then there is a theory of explanatory critique, concerned with the derivation of values from facts. These were the topics we discussed yesterday. Today I will concentrate on the fourth and fifth stages. The fourth stage was a theory of dialectic, in fact a dialectical system, called dialectical critical realism, which I elaborated especially in my book *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* and recapitulated in *Plato Etc.* Then there is the fifth stage, this is a spiritual turn within critical realism, in the development of a system or an approach which I have called transcendental dialectical critical realism. It sounds a bit of a mouthful but it is basically applying transcendental realism to the self.

What I will be doing today is talking about the dialectical and the spiritual deepening of critical realism and I will do it really by first of all elaborating the general structure of dialectical critical realism and showing how the latest stage, the fifth stage in the development of critical realism, deepens that system of dialectical critical realism, which already further deepens the levels of critical realism we were discussing yesterday. So the whole development of critical realism basically moves according to a

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single logic, which is dialectical, and basically oriented to the norms of truth and freedom. What is this logic? This is a logic in which we are looking at a subject matter and this subject matter finds itself with an absence, an incompleteness. There is something a little bit wrong with it, it is leaving something out, leaving a dimension of reality out. And that *incompleteness* ultimately reaches a point where it generates *contradictions* either externally with the totality, the discourse, the knowledge systems outside and/or internally within the discourse of critical realism itself—actually it will always be both—and those contradictions must be remedied by taking into account in theory and practice the missing levels of reality. Let me just focus on the aspect of theory-practice inconsistency. Suppose one acts dialectically but one thinks according to the canons of non-dialectical deductive logic, then sooner or later that inconsistency will lead to error and a variety of other ills unless remedied by resort to a greater totality. So the dialectical process is a continuing movement of deepening, of greater totalisation, leading to greater reflexivity, ultimately that is the unity of theory and practice. At some point or other critical realism would have to come to terms with the processual nature of life which is what is thematised in dialectic and the spiritual dimension to life which of course has been talked about by lots of philosophers and sages before, but which was then a taboo subject within western philosophy.

To make things very simple and clear what I want to do is outline the four stages, moments or levels of dialectical critical realism, what they are, give them a name, and for ease of memory, I will call it MELD. The M stands for the *first moment*, 1M, of the system of dialectical critical realism, ontology. So there we will be recapitulating some of the themes of transcendental realism and in fact the whole dialectical and spiritual turn within critical realism can be seen as a deepening within ontology. That is what the M stands for in MELD. The E stands for the *second edge*, 2E, that is the second dimension or stadium of dialectical critical realism and that is the edge of negativity, of absence, of dialectic itself. The great absence that dialectical critical realism pinpoints in hitherto existing western thought was the absence of the concept of absence. This is in a way the key moment within

dialectical critical realism. That is what the E stands for. The *third level*, 3L, that is the level of concern with issues of totality. The fourth stadium or stage of that system, the *fourth dimension*, 4D, which is where the D comes in, is the dimension of transformative praxis and reflexivity. Let us call the fifth stage of development, a *fifth aspect*, 5A, or a fifth turn within critical realism, then MELD becomes MELDA and the A stands for the fifth aspect.

Let me just summarise what I am going to say by saying that at the level of 1M, that is ontology, the spiritual turn or transcendental dialectical critical realism thematises issues to do with the ultimate nature of reality, including issues to do with god. That is the big topic there, god. The second edge thematises issues to do with transcendence. The third level thematises issues to do with love and emotions, particularly love which is the primary totalising agency (or so I want to say) in the social world. The fourth dimension deals with questions of right-action and also of enhanced reflexivity which ultimately entails what has been called cosmic consciousness or what is more popularly known as enlightenment, that is individual self-realisation. This I want to argue actually presupposes and entails universal self-realisation and without universal self-realisation you cannot ultimately have the unity of theory and practice.

Yesterday I argued that we had in contemporary society a profound alienation of the four dimensions in terms of which social being had to be understood. We were alienated from ourselves; we were alienated from each other; we were alienated from the social structures which we reproduced or transformed but which we had never created; and we were alienated from the material world, the natural world which we inhabit. This last is a very profound alienation which is taking the form of an oncoming global crisis. The root of all these alienations was self-alienation, that is alienation from ourselves. This is a position which brings together the most profound theorists, philosophers and indeed practitioners of emancipatory thought in east and west alike. They all presuppose that in some way we are essentially at some level far greater, far nobler, tar more creative, far more loving, essentially free, even perhaps divine, unique (unified but unique) individuals

with powers and possibilities which are in some way blocked or constrained by a superstructure in terms of which we live our lives. So that deep reality is in some way occluded from ourselves and systematically at all those four levels of social being. These thinkers—and this is the line that I will be arguing—actually presuppose a very noble and great view of humanity. Equally at the same time, therefore, a thorough critique of what happens in actuality, including the actuality of alienated man. This whole turn really is a reversal of much of the interest of western philosophy. You will remember Kant talked about two things which he thought were fundamental. One was the starry heavens above, the other was the moral law within. We in the west have investigated thoroughly the starry heavens above, but we have not explored this moral law within. So what I am doing today is looking at how we set about exploring it. That is the deeper, essential self that is actually tacitly presupposed by all our practices and on which oppression, unhappiness and other ills feed as parasites because they could not live without it. They could not live without this more basic substratum but certainly we could live here without those ills and oppressions which are parasites on us.

Let me resume some of the themes of ontology, that is the first stadium 1M of ontology. Yesterday I argued for the inexorability and irreducibility of ontology. And I also argued for the necessity of an ontology of a specific kind, that is for a view of the world as being structured, differentiated and changing against the flat, undifferentiated, unchanging view of orthodox western philosophy—particularly as encapsulated in theories like the Humean theory of causal laws which I argued was actually the lynchpin of most western epistemology. Then I looked at how someone who had a wrong theory in practice, say a working scientist, could nevertheless do good science, produce good results (as it will inevitably be the case that scientists and ordinary people do succeed in finding out about the world, just as they succeed in being loving, creative, spontaneous etc.). And we saw that a scientist to do science had to work with an idea of the transfactuality of reality. This was a tacit presupposition of his practice. He had to assume that causal laws and the other objects of scientific investigation existed and acted at a deeper level than

that of the pattern of events. So if in his philosophical consciousness he thought of himself as merely passively recording empirical regularities then he would be in theory-practice contradiction. And this gave rise to the figure of what I called the TINA formation. That is the way in which a truth or a level of reality is necessarily presupposed in practice for any causal efficacy whether it is denied in theory or not. TINA, it will be remembered, stood for *there is no alternative*. So if something is true and we are operating at that level, whether or not we are aware of it, we must act in a way which is in accordance with that truth. And no engineer who is investigating a train crash, or trying to launch a rocket or trying just to mend his car, fridge or washing machine, will for a moment assume that the laws of nature that he is employing are merely describing the pattern of events, because the pattern of events is idiosyncratically chaotic. So he assumes that there are mechanisms really at work operating behind and irrespective of what is going on at the surface level where he is practically engaged. And that figure of thought, of a false theory nevertheless presupposing for its causal efficacy a truth, is a very important one. We can see in it parallels to Marx's critique of a political economy where he argues that the whole surface appearance of capitalism describes but nevertheless depends on a deeper reality which it occludes. He called that reality exploitation, because it consisted of the extraction of surplus value through unpaid labour, a mechanism necessarily screened for the effective functioning of a capitalist economy. But nevertheless a level of reality, which was there, without which nothing else could go on. That superficial level of reality actually dominated as well as occluded the level of reality on which it was parasitic. We looked at a comparison there with the Vedic concept of *maya*, the world of illusion, actually presupposing the world of spirit or the absolute or Brahman or whatever on which it reposes. But it reposes as a kind of veil until we force our way through the veil. And the everyday world of illusion, or to use Marxian terms, ideology, in which we live is the dominant world in our everyday life, or so it seems at a theoretical level.

Then I want to argue that though it actually is the dominant world, at least in our conscious activity, nothing at that dominant

level could happen *without* the tacit presupposition of the more basic level on which it is dependent. There is an asymmetry, a unilateral dependency of the false or mystifying, dominant level on the true, more basic, underlying but suppressed and screened level. We can take an example here from Chomsky. Chomsky argues that in virtue of our innate capacity to acquire a language we are capable, in principle, at birth of generating an infinite number of sentences, including sentences that we will never generate, including languages that we will never learn. There is an essential creativity which lies behind our specific uses of a specific language. We have that innate possibility of the infinite. Rousseau put this point of view very well when he said that man is born free but is everywhere in chains. So what we are trying to do in the project of universal self-realisation or emancipation is throw off the chains. This immediately gives rise to a general definition of emancipation or liberation as the shedding or disemergence of unwanted and unnecessary determinations. That much we covered yesterday under the general rubric of ontology.

We also talked about dispositional realism, the reality of powers, possibilities, tendencies. We talked about categorial realism, the way in which you had to be a realist not just about specific laws but about lawfulness, causality, space, time, process—all the basic categories in terms of which philosophy thinks the world. There was one thing which I did not go into yesterday and that was the concept of truth. I will briefly discuss this now before talking about what is perhaps the most troubling aspect for many minds, the aspect of this deepening of ontology at the first moment of dialectical critical realism, namely the topic of god. So let us discuss truth for a little bit first.

Now we could do a semantic analysis of truth, which applied to all reality. When we say that something is true there are four levels at which this statement or assertion must be understood. The first level is when you say 'that is true'. This is the fiduciary aspect, you are saying trust me, act on it, I give you my word, if I was you I would do it. It is like a social bond, it is a commitment, a promise, that is true as fiduciary. The second level of the analysis of the concept of truth is the epistemological level, in which when you say that something is true you are

saying you have good grounds for believing it to be so. This is warrantedly justified, this is epistemically assertable. This is the level of analysis of truth on which most philosophers have fastened. The third level to the analysis of truth, in this progressive deepening of the concept, is invoked when in saying something is true you are making a categorial claim about the world, you are saying this is how things are in the world. If I say grass is green I am saying that is the way it is in the world. If I say the structure of water is given by the formula H_2O (leaving aside a few complications), I am saying that is the way the world is. That is. truth as expressive. So we have truth as fiduciary, truth as epistemic, truth as expressive of the world. Then the fourth level of truth is truth as alethic. This is that level of truth in which when we talk about the truth of something we are talking about the reality which grounds, explains or causes it. If I wanted to say the truth of the statement that water boils at 100 degrees centigrade is the molecular structure of water (plus some other laws of physics), then that would be the alethic or real truth of it. Once I know the crystalline structure of a particular stone then I know why it reflects light of a certain wavelength in a particular way. Once I know the crystalline structure of emeralds I know why they must manifest themselves to us as green. This is truth as the real reason or underlying ground for phenomena. So it is important for our topic today because what I am arguing is that there is an alethic truth to man, which is his deep, hidden, occluded self which is nevertheless a necessary condition for everything that happens in the superficial, ordinary world of events. And that deep alethic truth has been buried not only in theory but in practice. The task of liberation is to free it, to realise it. I will be saying more about this when I come to the fourth dimension of practice after moving through the second dimension of negativity, dialectical reasoning and the third level of totality.

I have to say something about ultimata, the absolute which we briefly discussed yesterday and I am going to say a little bit about god. Now I do not believe that a belief in god is a necessary condition for being a good man, or anything like that. Quite the contrary. There are so many bad people who believe in god that no sort of equation like that can be made. Secondly, most,

but not all, of what I say is susceptible to purely secular interpretation. Thirdly, what I am really concerned about is the re-emphasis of spirituality in life and right-action, rather than theology. Nevertheless I do believe that we can rationally discuss the topic of god. So let me enunciate seven propositions on god. Seven statements that I think are true or would be true about god if god existed. And they may give you grounds in some way for a belief in god's existence.

So the **first** point is that ontological realism about god, that is a belief in the reality or existence of god, is quite consistent with epistemological relativism. That is with the idea that god manifests himself or herself or itself in a variety of different ways or is accessed by different people in different traditions in a plurality of different ways. This is exactly on a par with any scientific object. We know that scientific realism, ontological realism in science is compatible with, indeed necessitates, a view of the cognitive process in science as being relative, as being a social product, as being transformable. So the content of the experience of god should not be expected to be the same from one region of space time to another, from one person to another. So that is the first very important point; and nothing else is consistent with the transcendental realism that I have been developing in these talks.

The second thing to note is that the compatibility of ontological realism and epistemological relativism also entails judgmental rationalism. That is to say we can have better or worse grounds for adopting some particular god-oriented, some particular spiritual practice, and this means also that our claims to knowledge of god are fallible like anything else. Just because you claim to have a knowledge of god, it does not mean that you do. Fallibilism and all our rational faculties remain intact. I said 'if god exists, if god is real'. There are two senses to ontological realism about god. The first is just to make god in principle something which could or could not exist. This is the first step in realism. The second step of course is to say, yes, god does exist. It is important to see that you can be ontologically realist about god in the first sense and be an atheist in the second, that is deny that god exists. This is opposed to a widespread view in the west

today, among many priests and bishops but also Christian theologians, who say we do not have to ask questions about god's existence. God is just a convenient metaphor, a convenient way of redescribing certain religious practices. That is their position, and it is probably the dominant position in western theology, that we can abstain from any view on whether god is real or not. This in fact is a kind of cop out. Because whilst it is fine to say that you do not know whether god exists or not, to invoke god in some way as a metaphor in a religious practice without considering it's truth or reality to be a legitimate topic for discussion is absurd. For this is something which is actually believed or disbelieved by religious practitioners; for instance in prayer the person who is praying is praying because he believes that god exists, is listening to him and in some sense cares.

All these moments are very important and they all imply certain things which are wrong about contemporary theology. Obviously once you accept epistemological relativism you must accept tolerance and pluralism. Obviously once you accept judgmental rationalism you must accept your own fallibilism and the fallibilism of your tradition to any claim to knowledge of the absolute or the divine. So that is the first proposition, namely, ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationalism are all compatible and they all must be applied to the topic of god.

The **second proposition** I want to assert is that ontological immanence, that is the view that god is immanent within being, is consistent with epistemic transcendence—either in the sense of being unknown, god could be real even if we do not know it, or in the sense of being knowable in a way which is not susceptible to the normal canons of our discursive intellect. That is, knowable in some sort of way, through some sort of experience, in which the normal subject–object division, distinction or duality, that is the terms of the categories in which we normally think the non-theological and the non-spiritual, as I will go on to argue later, breaks down. Typically in this moment of transcendence people feel infused. This parallels what happens in science when there is a breakthrough, a moment of inspiration. Or while we are listening to music, or when we are going for a

walk in nature and we have an experience of transcendence, in which we become engulfed by, that is, overawed by the object, phenomenon or experience. In this moment you become one with what you experience; and this is the characteristic of transcendental experiences. The subject–object duality, in terms of which we normally apprehend and think the world, collapses. There are two ways in which god could be epistemically transcendent, one is that he is not known at all, the other is that he is not known through the discursive intellect.

The **third proposition** I want to affirm about god is that the ontological ingredience, that is immanence within being of god, the ingredience of god within man, if god is truly a kind of envelope which sustains and binds everything, then god, in a certain way, must be ingredient within us. If you accept that there is a level of the divine which binds everything, which sustains everything, then it must also sustain or in some way be the ontological basis of man himself. To talk about the ontological *ingredience* of god in man is not to say that man *exhausts* god, because god will always be transcendent with respect to man and this is implied by the non-anthropocentricity and the non-egocentricity that I argued for yesterday. God will always be transcendent with respect to man because god, in this view, is the envelope which must be present in other beings to some extent or other, but of course in a different form. And secondly, because he is a bigger and wider totality he will always be something which is in part beyond man. There will always be a 'beyondness' about god, even if he is ingredient in man. This actually defines within religious practices and traditions a spectrum of immanence and transcendence, what I will call the immanence/transcendence spectrum. For some religious traditions, for example Islam or Judaism, god is transcendent, that is we cannot actually access him or we can only access him indirectly through the mediation of a holy text like the Koran or in a particular practice like prayer. For other traditions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, if it sustains the concept of god at all, which I believe it does, god is immanent, ingredient in man. So you can actually look at religious practices and traditions in terms of how much they stress immanence and how much they stress

transcendence. Now if god is ingredient in man, he does not exhaust man. Thus, not only is he not exhausted by man, he does not exhaust man, because man has free will and so we have the possibility of error, evil and what has been called 'structural sin', that is the proliferation of ills, evils at all those four planes of social being at which alienation occurs. And from all this it follows that god is the alethic ground, the ultimate essential ingredient within man. God would be, in some sense, the truth in man. That is to say the ingredient within man which we are trying to liberate would be divine. Not the whole of divinity but at least have a claim to be called divine.

The final aspect of this third theorem that I am discussing involves the distinction I made yesterday between the domains of the real and the actual and the empirical. Remember the real includes as a proper sub-set the actual, which in turn includes as a proper sub-set the empirical. God or the divine is present in man at all three levels. First at the level of the real, as I am talking now about god as the essential ingredient, god is there as real as an infinite field of possibilities. That is the deep, ingredient, essential self that we want to liberate. Secondly god, or this divine aspect within man, is present as actual, as the presupposition of everything we do. I once gave the example of the dependence of the violence of war on love. Oppression actually presupposes free, creative, loving human beings. The totality of what I have called master–slave relationships depends entirely on the creativity of slaves. All these things depend on innate, free, and great and noble capacities which are present there in man in actuality. So we have god not just as a field of possibilities, but as actuality. Thirdly, this divine ingredient within us can be experienced in at least two different ways. First of all it can be accessed through practices or in moments of what one might call deep or bliss or transcendent experiences. But secondly it is manifest spontaneously, or so I want to argue, in every genuine human act. For instance there is an element of creation *de novo* in all truly transformative acts. Creation out of the blue, creation which seems to come from nowhere, is an element of all genuine emergence, all genuine novelty and therefore all genuine transformation in the social world. In this sense man, in his human activity,

recapitulates in some way the idea of gods' creation of the world. This was however not only *de novo*, but *ex nihilo*, completely out of the blue, from the void, out of nothing and logically god must in some way create himself out of the void—a very difficult concept for dualistic, or indeed any other kind of thought.

When we have these transcendental experiences they typically slip between thoughts, they occur in moments when thought is suspended. Of course they only occur to people like our hard working scientist when the ground is immanently well prepared by rigorous discursive thought. So when Newton had the idea of gravity the sublating concept came to him when he saw the apple fall. It came only to him, because only his mind had been so prepared that he was capable of getting this burst from nowhere. But it is also important to note that it only came to him because he was not thinking, because his mind was at rest. You might say this burst from nowhere is actually the kind of alethic self-revelation of some deeper being that knows it all, or just is the reality he is investigating, or that it is already present, implicit in him, waiting to be explicated in his conscious experience. Actually I would probably want to say all of these things (suitably qualified), but we need not go into this now. What the case was is that in that moment he touched or accessed a deeper level of reality, in virtue of his own deeper, essential self, which slid through the space or gap, in that moment between thoughts which was the occasion of his inspiration. This moment is typically of silence, of rest, of relaxation in which we recharge ourselves. When we talk about social transformation we must not forget the moment of play, of idleness, of silence, of sleep, of stillness, of peace, of calm.

Now very quickly on to the other propositions that I want to affirm about god; and then we will move on to the other moments of dialectical critical realism and the spiritual turn within them. The **fourth proposition** is that the proof of god's existence can only be experiential and practical. No one can prove to you that god exists. This can only come from your experience and practice, it can only come from experience within. The **fifth proposition** is that if you accept this view of god as an all-sustaining envelope ingredient in man but not only in man, an

envelope, a sort of cosmic envelope, which sustains, creates and plays a significant role in transforming man and the rest of the world, then this gives a certain view of what man's role is. Man's role may be called, appropriating a term used by medieval theologians in the west, 'theosis'. This means the maximisation of the presence of god or the divine on earth: then firstly in himself through the liberation of this essential ingredient, this (if you like) divine spark; and secondly, through the project of universal self-realisation, that is liberation of all beings everywhere. **Sixth**, the transcendent and transcendence are not unusual phenomena. I want to argue that the experience of transcendence is not just exceptional but a part of the normal process of science; it is not only saying there is something there which transcends our experiences, but that in scientific innovation we have an experience which is transcendental in the sense of collapsing subject–object duality. Transcendence then is something which is vital for scientific discovery and growth, which is never mechanical nor algorithmic, always involves a moment of inspirational creation on the basis of that hard prepared ground. Moreover, all dialectics of de-alienation, like this general project of theosis or universal self-realisation, will depend essentially on love, the great expanding, liberating force in the social world and arguably the universe. Even as a scientist you will never discover something new about your subject matter unless you, in some way, love it: Aristotle, Darwin, Newton, Marx, Freud are all cases in point. That then was the sixth proposition.

The **seventh** and final proposition that I want to assert about god (and remember I am really talking mainly here about the god within) is that there is a relationship of unilateral, one-way dependency. What has been called a fallen world, a world characterised by evil, oppression, sin, alienation, whatever categories you want to use, could not exist without that essential ingredient, that is without our noble, higher selves. But we could certainly do fine without them. Concretely this means that if we are emergent from god or the divine then we could not exist without that. If there is a bit of god within us, then this puts a different aspect or perspective on things. Just as Krishna told Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, your soul is immortal so do not

worry about whether you die or not, that soul will exist independently of your death, so you could say that if there was a higher essential aspect to humanity, it could survive and flourish without all the ills that beset us on this planet. But certainly those ills that beset us on this planet could not survive without that deeper essential creative, loving self. We cannot carry on as we are. Rosa Luxembourg declared at the beginning of the twentieth century that the alternatives were between socialism and barbarism. We can say at the beginning of the twenty-first century that the alternatives are between self-realisation, ultimately universal self-realisation, or the decimation of the species, the mortal coil in which our immortal divinity is embodied within us. We could exist without those ills which are threatening the very survival of the species on the planet. I have said a lot about god, because it is a topic which has been rather taboo in western philosophy and because I wanted to air the subject. Not, as I said, because I want to convert any of you to a belief in god's existence. For what I believe is truly essential to rescue in human life is this element of spirituality which I will come to when I talk about right-action.

First a little bit about the second edge of negativity. This is the domain of absence. Absence is an absolutely crucial concept. Absence is necessary for the intelligibility of any being at all. It would be impossible for you to hear me unless there was a space, a gap between my words and indeed unless there was actually a physical gap between us through which that sound could travel. Absence is necessary to any phenomena. Most importantly absence is necessary for change. Because change and process is always the absenting of what was present and the presenting of what was absent. So there is this duality of absence and presence. But since the time of Parmenides western philosophy has had a taboo on absence. Parmenides said you cannot speak of what is not. Even the very greatest dialectician in western thought, Hegel, actually eliminated absence as soon as he could. At the beginning of the logic, his famous *Science of Logic*, starting from the category of being he moves quickly from being to nothing and in fact nothing is the last negative category we hear of. The next category is becoming and then everything else takes place on a purely positive plane.

The kind of absence I am arguing for is not indeterminate absence like nothing; it is *determinate absence*, absence as experienced as lack, as need, as want. It is the absence which prompts a hungry man to search for his dinner. It is the absence of water, the absence of fresh air which is what pollution causes. That absence is in fact a vital motor of change in social life. This brings out what I think Marx meant when he talked about Hegelian dialectic having a rational kernel which was shrouded by the mystical shell. So what I want us to do is say a little bit about what that kernel is.

The rational kernel of dialectic is as a learning or developmental process driven by absence. For instance in science we have a theory which is incomplete in some way, this incompleteness, betokening absence will generate contradictions, inconsistencies, anomalies which will pile up to a point at which they will become unbearable. Then we will have the moment of transcendence to a greater totality and that transcendence to a greater totality will remedy the initial generative absence; and in that remedying of the absence will restore consistency within the theoretical field. That is the dialectic of science; and that is also the dialectic of all developmental learning processes. It is driven by absence and it is also remedied by absence; because in this transcendence to a new concept, in this moment of scientific creation, this new concept which is going to do all the work leading to a new theoretical edifice, a greater scientific construction, that concept cannot be mechanically or algorithmically induced or deduced from the preexisting data. It is not something which is given by the data. It is something which is genuinely novel, which comes from the creative imagination. So within this moment of transcendence to a new concept there is a moment of transcendence itself—a moment of transcendence in the process of transcendence to a greater totality. It is in this moment that the new concept comes, from nowhere or anyway from an experience in which subject–object duality breaks down. That is the rational kernel in Hegelian dialectic. There is no time here to go on to talk about the mystical shell which is briefly the absenting of the concept of absence and its other features, but we will do that some other time.

I go on to two very important things which are implied by the dialectical view of the world at this second edge. The first is that analytical reasoning is limited: this is the dialectical critique of analytical reasoning. Every process of thought, every process of development breaks at some point or other the strict laws of deductive logic. Deductive logic has a role to play within science but what is happening when we are doing creative science or creative philosophy is that we are always teasing concepts, stretching our imagination. For instance, to give an example which I have used already, when initially in critical realism the subject of ontology was opened up, that is of a real world of being existing relatively independently of our beliefs, then it seemed like ontology, or being and our beliefs were being counterposed. But, upon reflection, of course those beliefs had to be situated within ontology itself. So knowledge became part of reality. Epistemology properly understood was not only opposed to, but a part of ontology: beliefs were in the same world as the objects they were about. In any movement to a greater totality concepts are always going to be stretched, so that the process is always going to appear slightly shocking and to violate strict deductive logic.

What then is the role of deductive logic? What happens then is that when a scientist has successfully described a field of data, and this is true of all practitioners, they will stretch their concepts, build creative models in order to capture a reality deeper than or wider than the data. The creative scientist is a bricoleur. The bricolage is the junk in a builder's yard, which is the Heideggerian ready-to-hand, the material a scientist must use if he is to capture in words or in materialised phenomena something new. This will always involve tinkering around, folding one concept in there, another in there, generating a lot of superficial inconsistencies until he gets to a point where he has built up a theory which can be rigorously tested, in the empirical moment of science, against that new deeper reality, which generated the more superficial one he was initially at. Then he can write it all up in a nice research paper and everything will follow from the premises to the conclusions, everything can be set out in strict deductive logic. That is what I have called the Leibnitzian hour,

that is the final test of a theory. It is not the starting point, but an ending point. An ending point which is purely provisional. It is certainly not the end of science, but a bouncing off point for a new round of scientific discovery. For once you get to that point the scientist will then move on to discover a deeper, or wider totality which will explain *that level*. So science must be viewed as a process in motion continually, incessantly. Development in a science, in thought, in intellectual life, in culture, in society, must be viewed in an organic processual way. Our model should be the development of an acorn into an oak. It cannot be the derivation of our conclusions from premises. That plays only a limited role within thought. What most creative scientific thought is trying to do is to stretch itself, trying to stretch our concepts until it is able to appropriate discursively something new.

As I have touched upon transcendence, I just want to add that once you have a moment of transcendence, even though the subject–object duality may have broken down, this does not mean that it cannot be described *retrospectively* in a discursive way. It just means that the transcendental experience is not equivalent to its discursive description. So we not only have thought which does not satisfy the canons of deductive logic, but experiences which do not satisfy the canons of the discursive intellect; and both play a part in science as well as in ordinary life. The non-discursive experience can be described discursively, but that discourse is not the same as the experience. I may be talking about prayer or meditation but that talking is not the prayer or meditation it is about. It is also worth noting that both deductive logic and the discursive (as distinct from the intuitive) intellect are closely intertwined with a society which systematically privileges the digital, sentential, binary, oppositional, sequential, 'masculine' left brain over the analogical, iconic, holistic, synthetic, fuzzy, intuitive, convergent, 'feminine' right brain—that is conditionality, calculation, contract and control over unconditionality, immediacy, spontaneity and freedom.

The final point I want to make turns on the critique of the notion of the fixity of the subject in the subject–predicate form. Western philosophy always assumes that if there is any change, it will be at the level of the predicate. You know the standard form

of a proposition is: a subject is such and such. Pauline is happy. If there is any change it is going to come at the level of the predicate, what attributes she has. It is not going to come at the level of herself. And then the subject, Pauline, is assumed to be fixed. Only her happiness is changeable. Now this is a completely wrong view of change. What we have to do is understand that the subjects themselves are processes in motion. We cannot reify them in the way in which analytical logic has typically done. We can also note that no coherent account of change can be produced unless change is attributed to a subject—for what is it in the predicate that changes, that too must surely be a subject? Any change is a change in the thing; as such, always presupposes an Aristotelian material cause. Moreover, it is essential to place change within the subject, because I am going to argue (as I suggested yesterday) that not only is self-alienation the root of all ills, but that all emancipation is self-emancipation, that real emancipation, self-transformation can only come from within; it can never be imposed from without. And that self-change, self-transformation, which naturally will usher in change at all other levels of social being; and that self-transformation is the heart of the process of the project of universal self-realisation. So that is why the critique of the fixity of the subject in the subject–predicate form is so important.

The third level of totality. Totality includes concepts such as interconnection, objectivity, subjectivity, internal relationality, but above all universality and universalisability. Just as I argued for dialectical reasoning, which subsumed analytical reasoning as a special case, I want to argue for dialectical and developmental universalisability. Analytical universalisability is just the subsumption of an event or a thing under a universal without any mediation and this is characteristic not only of western philosophical thought but also the social systems in which we live. Thus, on the Humean theory of causal laws which we discussed yesterday, reality is seen as being empirical invariances. This means that everything can be subsumed under a universal covering law, seen as actualistically describing what the phenomena are. Everything is just subsumed immediately under that empirical invariance. In Kant's categorical imperative the maxim is this: what you do you

should be able to universalise. In other words test whether you can tell a lie. Is it the case that you want lying to be universalised? No. So you cannot tell a lie, therefore you must never tell a lie. Now this is very counter-intuitive because obviously we all know there are lies and lies, and some white lies are good. Similarly if I give Pauline some advice, this may not be the right advice to give to Bridget over there. What is right for one person is not necessarily right for another. These are the intuitions we have. What this means is that we have to think universalisability and universality in terms not just of analytical universality which covers everything in a blanket way, but in terms of specific differentiations and in terms of geo-historical trajectories, and then in terms of the uniqueness of that individual or phenomena. No two human beings are ever going to be the same, no two instances of an event, nor will the same phenomena ever be *exactly* the same.

The logic of uniformity, the logic of analytical universalisability is written into the logic of the capitalist mode of production; and I must add (because this is not a political point) that it was written into the practice of the so-called actually existing socialist states, and it is written into the practice of many political parties. It helps to explain the postmodernist reaction. The post-modernist reaction is to stress difference, diversity. The post-modernist is saying in his or her politics of identity, no we are not the same, we may be members of the same political party, but some of us are women, others of us are men. We women, we will be feminists, we will be different. You well know this form of reaction which stresses difference, diversity and change and that is a very salutary reaction. It goes wrong only when it leaves out the whole idea of universality itself. So it is fine for women, feminists to say we women are different, or for Indian women to say we Indian women are different, if they therefore do not split themselves off and perpetuate their own alienation by dividing themselves off from their essential unity as human beings with men or with other women who are not Indian. So that underlying unity is what is lost in the politics of identity. This politics has other forms besides postmodernism such as communalism and fundamentalism, forms which are fear-based reactions which reproduce the alienation they are a symptom of. Counterposed to fear is love. Love unites,

binds, totalises, heals. Fear divides, ruptures, alienates, splits. I cannot say anything more here about the third level of totality.

We now turn to the fourth domain of agency. What we have to do is, as Krishna did in the Bhagavad Gita, resolve the problem of action by an expanded conception of the self. The Leninist question 'what is to be done?' has to be resolved by asking the transcendental question 'who am I?' or 'what is the self?' Once we have a deeper conception of human being then we have a better conception of action. I want to enunciate five theorems or necessary truths about action, because it is very important to be clear about this.

Five theorems. Firstly the irreducibility of intentionality, action is always mediated by consciousness. This entails the critique of all materialism, but also a critique of dualistic disembodiment, we are embodied; and understanding that consciousness and ideas are causally efficacious and also causally explicable, which means that reasons must be causes. We are against an artificial dualism there. That is the irreducibility of intentionality. Secondly there is the irreducibility of agency. The fact is we must act. This is a critique then of what Hegel called the 'beautiful soul'. For example the yogi who disengages himself from action, or the would-be yogi, not the true yogi, because yoga as you know means union therefore it must mean engagement everywhere. The would-be yogi disengages from action but exists as a parasite on society, actually tacitly presupposing it. So this gives a model of engaged but unattached activity. That is what we are seeking. The moment of engagement is stressed by western philosophers. The moment of unattachment has been stressed by mystics in east and west alike. Thirdly, agency is geo-historically processual, always social, always has these four dimensions I talked about earlier.

Finally, agency ultimately, at some point, must be spontaneous. That is to say at some point a practical syllogism, as Aristotle understood, must issue in an action. We cannot just go on thinking; at some point thought must issue in an action. I may think about how to tilt this microphone and I may think well, should I do it this way, should I do it that way, but at some point I just have to do it, at some point we always just have to

perform an action. At some point thought must pass into action. There is a direct link then between thought and action. My argument is that the deeper the level of our selves from which we act, the more our actions will be complete, coherent and in this way spontaneously right. When we know how to drive a car, we do not have to think about it, we just do it. When we know how to speak, we do not need to think how to formulate a sentence, we just formulate it. So the deeper we go into ourselves the more spontaneously right our action will be. If everything depends on action and action is ultimately spontaneous or basic in the sense coined by the western philosopher Danto, then all the actions we do at all the levels of social being must ultimately come from the self. This therefore immediately prioritises self-change and self-transformation as the key moment in remedying the alienation at all those four levels of social being. So we prioritise self-change to social change. But there are three points to notice here. Firstly, and this is the fifth theorem about agency, I cannot act myself without simultaneously acting at all four planes or levels of social being. That is to say anything I do, coming from me, will be (or involve) an effect at the level of the stratification of my personality, but will also involve material exchanges with nature, social interactions with other human beings and impact in some way on the social structure. So though all action comes from the self, necessarily, at the same time all action is always potentially or actually efficacious at all other planes of social being. The second point to note is that we cannot be free as individuals unless and until that freedom issues in and is coupled with the self-realisation of all. Finally, more specifically, there is a dialectic between self-change and social change.

We can show this briefly through dialectics of inaction and dialectics of action. What we have to do is access our higher self; then—and this is the really important point—we have to shed everything which we are essentially not; then we have to fully embody it in the totality of our being; then we have to witness this higher self in every moment of our action and stabilise it in our daily life. These *dialectics of inaction* will automatically—in virtue of the fact that we must act, we cannot just be (this is what I have called the axiological imperative)—result in *dialectics of*

action. These are briefly the more fully in touch with ourselves we are, the more we will spontaneously do what is right, the more compassionate, loving, caring, our action will be. So we have dialectics of love and solidarity. You will recall the dialectic of desire to freedom which I sketched earlier, the dialectic in which logically, once we have a desire, we are driven to the abolition of constraints on that desire; and then to the abolition of all dialectically similar constraints; and then to the abolition of all constraints, in virtue of their dialectical similarity as constraints on the realisation of human freedom. That dialectic can be given a further twist, by seeing that it entails a state in which one has no desires. First, subjectively because any desire will itself be a constraint, a limitation on our freedom. And secondly because objectively one is living in a world of abundance, one is living in a world in which, to use Marx's words, the free development of each is the condition but also the reality of the free development of all. Then we have the dialectic of recapitulation, for, as Freud put it, what we cannot remember we are bound to repeat. So we must thoroughly come to terms with, understand and then shed, that is let go of the past, the presence of the past. That will include the totality of attachments, and among our attachments are of course our aversions. Finally we have philosophical dialectics which include understanding and changing reality in accordance with the level of its deepest, most comprehensive categories, and rooting out everything which is inconsistent with it. From this perspective we can see alienation as actually a category mistake in reality.

Seven properties of right-action. Firstly, it will be spontaneous, coherent and compassionate. Secondly, it must be in the present, in the moment, we must not live in the past, we must let go of the past, let go of our attachments. This involves the idea, if you like, of ceasing to be bound *karmically* and acting from the *dharmic* standpoint. Nor can we live in the future, we should not worry, we should not project our ideals into the future; our ideals are here, in the present even if they are actually hidden, occluded or prevented from being realised. So we live in the present but we can only act from where we are, on our own particular axiological world-line. So we must not act in a voluntaristic

way. We can only do what we can do with the resources we have got. So this universal new beginning I am arguing for must be a chipping away with the resources that we actually have. We have to understand how we are actually, and not just ideally, constituted. This means that we have to take on board the negativity, the limitations and the conditionalities that we have inside ourselves; if you think you can be immediately and spontaneously free then that is a recipe for disaster. Fourthly, this action will be orientated to the installation of social justice, the abolition of the totality of master–slave relationships, the ending of all reified, voluntaristic modes of thought and behaviour. The ending of all conditionalities. What is normally called love is an exchange, what is true love is unconditional, is a giving.

Fifth, this must be fully integrated and balanced. Mind and body will be linked but we must also include the great missing element, emotion; we need to understand the tri-unity or trinity of mind, body and emotion. We will not have the dualism that leaves out emotions (including the negative emotions as well as the positive emotion of love). And right-action will be action under the inspiration of that essential ingredient which is spirit. Sixth, we move beyond dualism to the synthesis of opposites and their transcendence in higher totalities; to the elimination as far as is possible of all strife, to living in peace and harmony in the world, to the ending of alienation at all those four levels of being. Seventh, this will result in a simpler, purer society but also a richer and deeper one. It may be easier to create than we think. Because once we let go of false modes of thought and being, once we begin to access our higher selves, we can begin to see that really the problem is not so much of evil. Or not only of evil. For there is also, at least philosophically, a problem of good. Because how extraordinary it is that there is so much goodness and love in the world. Just think about it, let us focus on that, that love, goodness, nobility, courage, these are displayed everywhere in the perpetuation of social ills. Once we can tap through to that level then we may find it easier to build a world that we already (but not only) have inside us and universalise it everywhere.

Part Two

Debates within and about Critical Realism

Chapter Two

Critical Realism and Marxism*

Four recent turns in social thought that put dialectic back on the agenda

The core of this paper will be on dialectic, but I am going to approach it in a slightly roundabout way by listing four recent turns in social thought that put dialectic back on the agenda, in fact make it an urgent priority for us to come to terms with dialectic, and in particular with what was right and what was wrong in Hegelian dialectic which, as Marx quite rightly said, but did not really sufficiently elaborate and explain, is the core of all, at least western, dialectic. I want to situate in the context of these four recent developments in social thought, which make these times, contrary to surface appearances, actually quite dialectical. Secondly, I want to relate these four categories of changes in recent social thought to the four-dimensional schema which I have outlined in my book *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, articulating the system of dialectical critical realism. This tries to bring out Marx's intuition about dialectic and provide for us a

* ULU, London, 20 March 1997.

materialist but transformatively oriented dialectic. Then I want to take up the question of exactly the structure of Hegelian dialectic, what it is, what is the rational kernel, what is the mystical shell, and I want to argue that in addition to the rational kernel and the mystical shell, there is what I call the 'golden nugget', and then there is a fourth item: a platinum plate. So this paper will be a trio of quartets.

Turn towards realism

Let us talk about changes which have put dialectic back on the scene. The first movement in cultural and social thought has been a turn towards realism, an understanding that to deny the reality of anything is self-defeating. What is it that you are denying the reality of? It is quite obvious that the category of reality must include everything. It must include logical contradictions, inconsistencies, mistakes, and reality is a totality which defines the limits of our reason, and therefore, not to be a realist in the appropriate sense is pretty well impossible. Even if you are an idealist, I want to argue, you will end up by being an implicit realist. That is the first turn; it is a turn towards realism of a particular sort.

Processual turn in the natural sciences

The second is a processual turn, an interest in questions of geo-history in all the sciences, particularly in the natural sciences; in the social sciences it seems to have been eclipsed but that is only a surface illusion. But in biology, in physics, questions of space and time and causality and geo-history are there and increasingly coming to the fore.

The interconnectedness of things

The third turn is perhaps the one which is most familiar to all of us, it is the holistic, ecological turn. Analytical thought cannot come to terms with the interconnectedness of things which has been brought into sharp focus by issues of environmental and related crises. For, in virtue of its atomism and commitment to existentionalist definition, it disconnects things from each other, effectively treating them as separate and independent issues.

Reflexivity

The fourth turn is in a way the oldest turn, and it is a turn to reflexivity, and it is in fact very important. It was initiated by Descartes in modern philosophy, and then radicalised by Kant, Hegel and Marx, moving through the other so called 'masters of suspicion' Freud and Nietzsche into the twentieth century. It took a preoccupation with a concern with language as a means and medium of knowledge. This was very salutary, but in fact it is much more general than that. The criterion of reflexivity means that any philosophy which cannot sustain the intelligibility of its own content and production must be categorically ruled out; we can say straight away that it is false. A truly reflexive philosophy, I want to argue, will be totalising, it will thematise ontology, and it will reassert concepts of negation and negativity.

Critical realist component

Let me now turn to the critical realist component. Corresponding to the realist turn in recent thought, critical realism thematises ontology. I am going to argue that all these categories, the four categories I am going to discuss, are the categories of ontology, of absence, of totality and reflexivity; and I am also going to talk about transformative practices. These categories are essential for understanding dialectic. Let me go through the categories as thematised by dialectical critical realism: ontology, or the theory of being; absence as crucial to all transformation and to dialectic itself and to concepts of negativity and negation; the third concept is that of totality, which is an absolutely critical concept because typically in science, when we have an inconsistency, this means that there is an absence in our epistemic or thought field and we remedy this by a resort to greater totality; alongside totality, we have the absence of totality which is split, alienation, dualism, fragmentation, dichotomy.

When I am discussing these categories, I will also be discussing their inverses, which are so characteristic of analytical thought. The fourth category which I am going to highlight is the reflexive criterion of philosophy, but I am going to relate this

to the possibility of a philosophy which would be truly transformative, which would relate theory to practice, and which would act as an underlabourer to the real processes which are going on and which are seeking to overturn the way in which capitalism is systematically spoiling the natural, social, subjective, and relational conditions of production. This is a philosophy which is really pro-active, but also a pro-activity which is not a hypostatising, but something that vitally concerns all of us as human beings and citizens.

What is the contribution of critical realism to the first turn, the turn to the thematisation of reality? It is the rethematisation of ontology, of being, which was systematically denied by the whole tradition of contemporary philosophy from Descartes in favour of knowledge. I quote from Wittgenstein: 'It is sufficient to talk only of the network, not what the network describes'. A lot of people think that as philosophers all we have to do is talk about language or knowledge and we do not have to speak about that of which language or knowledge speaks about. But that position is evidently self-undermining, because what is the status of the discourse which enunciates that? I mean, is it real or not? Clearly, the discursive act has to be understood as being real and has conditions, real conditions and a real content, or an imaginary content, either way we cannot avoid questions of reality. It is quite obvious when you are studying the classical traditions of empiricism and rationalism that all these philosophers had an implicit ontology.

What was the implicit ontology in Humean positivism? It was a world which was constituted by atomistic individuals, possibly gendered man, cut off from their fellows and who sensed constant conjunctions of regularities thrown out by nature. The form of natural laws was taken to be if this, therefore that. Two implications of this are very important.

The first is that reality is on the surface, there is no depth to it. The second is, if these conjunctions are regular and constant, they are also eternal, so reality cannot be changed, whatever is must be. Wittgenstein again brought this out when he said that 'philosophy in the end leaves everything as it is'. This is quite the opposite of my view. In fact philosophy either reinforces or

undermines the status quo, it is either conservative with a little 'c' or radical with a big 'R'.

Let me say why this account of laws and this account of nature is false. If I go to the laboratory and attempt to test the law of gravity, what I have to do is to set up a specifically constructive environment in which I can appreciate the way in which a body falls to the ground. This does not mean to say that the law of gravity is not operating outside the experimentally closed conditions; the law of gravity is operating on us when we are sitting here, it is just counter-acted by real tendencies which are preventing the natural disposition of objects to fall to the ground. What in fact Humeanism does, or positivism does, is that it undermines the human praxis or labour that goes into establishing our knowledge of laws of nature and at the same time it undermines the depth of understanding that scientific knowledge can bring to us, the way in which it shows us a deeper level of reality. You can see it from the position into which classical philosophy got itself in the case of someone like Hume who argued that there was no good reason to not go out of a building by the window on the second floor rather than the door.

That is true in terms of the surface appearances, but we have a scientific understanding and also practical understanding informed by science and common sense: if we go out of the building by the window on the second floor we will fall to the ground and there won't be very much of us left, whereas if we go out by the door then we will, other things being equal, make a relatively trouble free exit. This failure to think through, this failure of philosophy, is extraordinary. I'll just take another case, because what critical realism does is that it says that knowledge is very important, and that in addition to knowledge, the over-encompassing reality is being; it also says that value is very important, and value was something else that tended to get eliminated by the positivists and a traditional account of science. You can see the sort of absurdity into which modern philosophy falls when Hume can come out and say 'It is not irrational to prefer the destruction of the world to my little finger'. If this is a result of modern philosophy, then it is a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is not even true on its own terms because it is clearly more rational for

him to prefer the destruction of his little finger to that of all the world. Why? Because the whole world includes his little finger. He was detotalising himself, he was excluding himself from the system of which he is a part.

And this is why the criterion of reflexivity, the capacity of a philosopher (or of a philosophy) to sustain his own content and conditions of production is so important. Once you establish that reality has a certain depth to it, then you can also ask questions about the conditions under which reality might be changed, which is also obscured by the failure to thematise being. That would take us very neatly to the second category of absence, but first I want to explore two consequences of the thematisation of ontology. The first consequence is a categorial realism. People have a misunderstanding of the nature of categories, they think like Kant that categories are things we impose on reality; but to the critical realist, the transcendental realist, the categories, if they are real, are constitutive of reality itself. That is, causality is no schema we impose on reality, it is actually out there.

The subject matter of philosophy, therefore, traditionally defined as being the understanding of categories, is reality, is being. This becomes very important when we move to the social world because we can then argue: reality is precategorised, but in the social world the way in which reality is categorised may be false. Social reality is conceptually dependent; the categories in terms of which we understand social reality may be systematically false, illusory, or misleading, and that is the clue to the concept of ideology. Ideology is a categorially confused reality. It is real but it is false. This is a possibility and an actualised possibility in social reality. The true nature of social reality is there 'beneath' the falsity.

Let us suppose, as I actually believe, that Marx got the fundamental structures of the capitalist mode of production absolutely right. This does not mean that there isn't a lot of work to be done. There we have a correct description of the categories of the economy, but part of this description shows the way in which reality appears to its agents as being categorially confused in virtue of the concept-dependent nature of the categories in terms of which they live their life; they live it in terms of illusion, they

live it in terms of what I would call a 'demi-reality', a half-light reality. The task of social science is to penetrate that demi-reality through to the underlying reality and situate the conditions of possibility of the removal of illusion, of systematically false being. This systematically false being is also systematically oppressive, paralysing, related to irrealist categorial structures and, I argue in *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, master–slave relationships, instrumental reasoning, analytical thought, analytical as distinct from dialectical universalisability, money and lots of other profoundly important phenomena. No one would argue that money is just a category, but money in our present society takes the form of categorial error; it depends upon categorial error. These are the implications of a categorial realism.

The second kind of realism is a dispositional realism. In critical realism we are talking about and concerned with the powers, the possibilities, the tendencies of things, which things possess even if they are not exercised. Why is this radical? Why should this interest a Marxist society? Clearly, if people had the capacity to organise a decent system of transport in London, they are not capable to do so, these are very important data, isn't it? The idea that we have tendencies, a child has a tendency to become a good musician, or possesses the power to acquire a range of skills, possesses the need, which is a closely related capacity, for adequate food, housing, health care, etc., these powers, possibilities, dispositions and needs are not satisfied, then they do not cease to exist; but the Humean actualist, collapsing reality, the domain of the real to the domain of what is actualised, does not allow for that possibility.

Critical realism asserts the absolute priority of the possible over the actual. The possible is ontologically, epistemologically and logically prior to the actual, and the possible is real. In addition to these tendencies and powers being possessed without being exercised, they may be exercised without being realised, in the way in which the law of gravity is operating on us now, or, to take ail example from political economy, there is a tendency for the rate of profit to fall, as a result of the rise in the organic composition of capital without it being realised as a result of offsetting tendencies which may be internally related to the mechanism

which explains the tendency, its exercise and its non-realisation. We get an idea of reality as being stratified, as being complex, as being deep, transformable, and we situate such things in the social sciences as the possibility of a more satisfactory, true to human nature, emancipated, freer mode of being, socially and individually; a dichotomy of which we should be very critical in its turn, but I just use it as a temporary place-holder. The key set of categories for dialectic are categories of negativity turning on the concept of absence.

This is the time for me to say what I think of Hegelian dialectic, and how absence features in its rational kernel. What I think Hegel did, and this is the rational kernel of dialectic, is that he produced a general theory of all learning processes, which is very simple. It applies to science, to social phenomena, and it goes like this: you have an incomplete totality, there is an absence, the absence generates inconsistencies, splits, incompleteness, tensions. This is resolved by transcendence towards a greater totality which incorporates the split-off element, the absented element as a part of the greater, more inclusive, totality. So we can work our way towards a general definition of dialectic as a theory of the experience of the processes of stratification and differentiation of phenomena.

Let me refer concretely to science in illustration of this general theory of learning processes. Everyone is familiar with the work of Kuhn; what happens before the scientific revolution is that the scientists are going along in a paradigm, there may be anomalies, these anomalies are satisfactorily explained and resolved, but sooner or later an anomaly becomes really problematic; that is the moment of inconsistency. From a dialectical point of view this signifies that the totality with which the scientist is working is incomplete, there is an absence. Error, although it is not the same as, always depends upon, absence. What happens is that the scientist has to have a reconceptualisation of the field, he has to introduce new phenomena, a deeper or wider level of reality, or a more inclusive totality. When she has done that, then the inconsistency is resolved and we have a greater totality, a wider totality aid ultimately, when we incorporate the social scientist herself, that totality, which of course exists in reality, should be

capable of reflexively situating the scientist herself. The schema is really very simple. It is incompleteness or absence generating inconsistency which is resolved by resort to transcendence, by a higher or more inclusive totality, including a greater or deeper one. That I think is the rational kernel of dialectic and it applies not only to science, but also to art and to all processes which change in human and, by a slight extension of the argument, in the non-human world. It was a great innovation for Hegel to bring out this logical structure which is nothing other than the dialectic of progress when it occurs.

What is the mystical shell in Hegel? The mystical shell in Hegel is his endism, his triumphalism and his failure to see that the dialectic will carry on; his commitment to what I call ontological monovalence, which is a purely positive account of being. What Hegel does is, when he was completed his system, he absents the very crucial notion of absence itself, he absents absence. It is true to say that he is an apologist for the Prussian state of his time. I think that the Left Hegelians were right.

We see philosophers such as Fukuyama writing in 1989 celebrating the end of history, echoed by philosophers such as Rorty. The idea that the dialectic is going to stop, the idea that no more change is possible. Together with this endism goes triumphalism. Hegel also committed the epistemic fallacy, that is the fallacy of reducing ontology to epistemology, because he thought the dialectic occurred only on the level of knowledge. Ultimately everything was subsumed by the absolute concept, the concept of absolute knowledge. We will see also that Hegel is detotalising and unreflexive, so he fails to satisfy all the categorial criteria that I have set up.

One thing is very interesting about this dialectical schema, and that is this: if we have a problematic situation, it cannot be resolved from within, the resolution is always by resort to what is left out, to what is transcendent with respect to the level of the experience concerned. It may be something that is split off, something that has been forgotten, or denied, or it may be something that operates at a higher level of reality. So the moment of transcendence in terms of which science or any other learning process moves to a higher or more inclusive level of reality,

is itself informed by a moment of transcendence. There is a transcendent element within the moment of transcendence and you can see that it is quite obviously the case that science is not algorithmic. If the solution is already there then there is no problem. You need something else. This points to the role of the scientific imagination, and in ethics the role of what I call 'concrete utopianism': using imagination to build models of a better society. That is the rational kernel and the mystical shell.

What is the golden nugget? The golden nugget in Hegel's theory is that he shows the way in which two things which cannot possibly be true together can be transmuted into negative subcontraries, two things which can both be true together. If you understand the working class or the bourgeoisie correctly, then you change your description of them and then in social science, to use again Marx's example, we have a coherent description of the social totality. If you stick with the nations and the bourgeoisie, from Marx's point of view, then you are going to have incoherent totality. The golden nugget is just this dialectic by which two things which cannot possibly be true together are transmuted by enriching their description and conceptualisation. And remember, we are talking about practical totalities in the practical field, that is about transforming them in a very literal sense, changing them, just as we are changing their descriptions, and changing their descriptions is also changing something real, so I am not artificially juxtaposing epistemology to ontology.

Epistemology can be contrasted with ontology but only within a concept of ontology which embraces them both. In other words, the knowledge of an object can be contrasted to that object but only within a concept of objectivity which embraces the knowledge itself. That is I think the golden nugget, which products what I call a dialectics of do-presence. One of the things we have come to learn in the context of Marxist historiography and economic theory is the way in which capitalism develops by eating up, as it were, other modes of production. Up to now there has always been a co-presence of modes of production, but we are getting to the point at which capitalism is becoming itself totalising. And we are living in a world in which capitalism, in

particular I think finance capitalism, that is money, is becoming the all-dominating, hegemonic and all-consuming power corroding and exhausting everything. That is the true and very frightening totality in which we live, in which there appears to most people to be no plausible alternatives to capitalism. Because it is very difficult to point to any actually existing alternatives to capitalism. Prior to 1989 one could argue that the Soviet Union was there, the Soviet empire was there, it might be, so to speak, wrong, and it might in many respects mimic capitalism, but at least it provided an alternative, in terms of which in the space of two you had the possibility of a third or a fourth, or the possibility of transforming one or the other. But now our polity is suffocated, this is an illusion, because something is going on underneath, but it is a very frightening illusion. If you look, it is not lust a question of economics; post-structuralists and lots of so-called non-realists are very interested in things like the media, but if you turn on the television you get the same programme in India today as you would in Cyprus or in America. This dialectics of co-presence and the apparent elimination of alternatives today is the so-called golden nugget in the Hegelian dialectic.

What I call the 'platinum plate' was something which Marx was very keen on, although he did not call it that, and this was the way in which Hegelian dialectic and in fact thought forms in general reflect, provide a diagnostic key to the reality to which they are a part. He talks about abstraction not being a figment of Hegel's imagination but a feature of the state which Hegel describes, the state itself abstracts, money itself abstracts from the needs and possibilities of the individuals who exchange it. This is dialectic as a platinum plate.

Why is the concept of absence so important, and why has philosophy denied it? What are the consequences of it? Nothing which is purely positive is possible, and anything which contains an absence contains the possibility of change. I will give a well-known example. If you consider a sentence, the spaces, the absences in it make it one sentence rather than another, whether it is a written or a spoken sentence. We would be indistinguishable as people without the spaces, the absences that mark our particular physiognomy. Absence is a truly vital concept, and I

think it is not possible to have a purely positive account of being, it is not possible to have a purely positive world. Where does this illusion come from? Historically, it comes from the Parmenidian distinction of being and non-being, the suffusion of non-being by being, which Plato took over in terms of his analysis of negation and change in terms of difference; he said, well obviously things are different, but there is no real negativity, there is no real change, there is no not. As early as Parmenides and Plato, philosophy's ideological role as a reifier, a reinforcer of the status quo, was already there. What is the consequence of eliminating absence? Of eliminating something which is categorically necessary?

What would happen is that implicit totality would be formed, and we would have a split. If I argue that absence itself is categorically necessary, then its denial will produce an inconsistency or a split, and so we have the problem of induction in epistemology; how can we guarantee that the laws of nature will continue as they are? Because the absence of ontological depth is a presence one has to resort to a fideistic account, because either one says: there is no ground to the laws of nature continuing, or one says: god by a miraculous move will keep, by resort to a transcendent ground, these laws of nature going. If you ask: Why do you believe this? Then it is just a question of faith, which was essentially Kant's answer. You have the split between fact and value, and, most important of all, the split between mind and body. Other splits go along with it: the split between theory and practice, the split between philosophy and knowledge and reality. All these splits are symptoms of absence and there, I want to argue, is the primordial mistake of philosophy.

In fact, without absence you cannot sustain difference and unless you can sustain difference, then philosophy will consume everything, so you will not be able to distinguish the reality within philosophy from the realities which are science, from the realities which are human needs or survival, from the realities which are the needs of other species on our planet. That is what is so important about absence. What happens when you eliminate absence? If absence is categorially necessary, it is an implicit totality rather than an explicit totality. If something is categorially

necessary, it will appear. Let me give you some example of this. The famous pragmatic philosopher Richard Rorty argues for a form of eliminative materialism in Part I of his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, basically arguing that the world consists just of atoms and the void. So, what is the status of his own discourse? We have a revealing incapacity of the philosopher to situate himself; if his own discourse is categorially necessary, then it will appear some way or other, and of course, it does in Part III of his book, where he argues that the task of philosophy is conversational hermeneutics. How do you reduce conversational hermeneutics to atoms and the void? You had crude reductionist materialism with an hyper-idealism sitting hand in hand.

Instead, what I would argue for is an emergent powers materialism, which would situate the discourse of philosophers as one level of reality within a stratified reality which contains of course atoms and the void and things far beneath atoms and the void and contains much else besides conversational hermeneutics. This particular polarity, a variant of the mind–body dualism, is very popular in philosophy today. Philosophers like to think of themselves and the academic community as being sort of language, and everything else is kind of body, crude body. It is not a caricature. These splits reveal the absence of coherent philosophy within a lot of contemporary thought. What I and my colleagues as critical realists are trying to do is point to these absences and reconstitute an explicit and well-thematised totality.

That is, engage that transformation which I called the 'golden nugget', the transformation of positive contraries into negative sub-contraries, by situating both, say, atoms and the void and conversational hermeneutics within a wider, broader totality and, ultimately, situating our own discourse itself as philosophers. I would like to end up by saying that I want to argue that dialectical critical realism or dialectic and critical realism and everything else which is necessary for an adequate ontology and philosophical sociology is a package. You cannot select some items of it and reject other items of it. If you do not embrace something like critical realism in its dialectical form, then you are going to end up being a solipsist, like Hume. He could not sustain the

reality of other objects, he could not sustain the reality of causality, then the question is: What was the status of himself? The person who could not sustain all these other things, the self disappeared. He could not sustain the link between two impressions. It was an extraordinary *reductio ad absurdum* of his own philosophy, and instead of questioning his premises, it has been accepted as a textbook example of good philosophy since his day. Instead it is a caricature.

Philosophy must be consistent with itself, and to be consistent with itself it must be consistent with its context, and to be consistent with its context it must be consistent with the whole of reality. What I want to argue is that something like dialectical critical realism, and I would want to add now further moments or elements to it, is a package, and that irrealism is a package likewise, and that irrealism is deeply intricated into the categorial structures, the demi-reality of societies which are characterised by master–slave or oppressive relationships. And in fact, I think I can show that any society characterised by master–slave relationships or the existence of money or instrumental modes of reasoning, will have an irrealist categorial structure. So, it is not just an oddity that all these philosophers have come up with such absurd theories. These absurd theories are rooted in structures of oppression and it is our task as philosophers to give social scientist and ordinary people the tools to eliminate these structures of oppression, what I call master–slave relationships, these modes of manipulative and instrumental reasoning, these abstract universals and narrow particulars that inform social reality, these vested interests, these reifications, these alienations.

It is our job to give ordinary people and social scientists the critical tools to bring about a society in which something like dialectical critical realism would be the common sense of the day, because it would reflect the categorial structures at work in that society. This is really to throw everything open for discussion now, and leave it to everyone to have a go at me.

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Question: Ontology seems to be only descriptive and not radical enough in postmodernism. I was wondering if you have noticed that tendency?

Roy: There is that tendency. Let us talk about post-structuralism. The main problem with a lot of post-structuralism is that it does not thematise ontology. Heidegger in a certain sense is an exception to this, he thematised it in a way which can be valuable from the point of view of common sense, but it is not adequate from the point of view of understanding science. The extraordinary thing about contemporary philosophers who are renowned on the Left—I just name three: Derrida, Habermas and Althusser—is that they all denied ontology. Derrida perhaps less than Habermas, but Habermas, if you mention the word ontology to him he goes berserk. What happens in the case of these authors is that they tacitly inherit an implicit ontology, which is the positivist ontology, the epistemology of which they reject, so that you get a super-idealism; you get a post-structuralist kind of trendy epistemology but on the basis of an implicit positivist ontology, because of their failure to thematise ontology. I think there is a lack of ontological depth in Derrida's work. I think Derrida is a great philosopher, I drink Habermas is too. I think in Foucault's work again the failure to coherently thematise ontology and thematise the different ontologies that we know, the ontology of science, the ontology of the social world, results ultimately in an ontology of chance, of contingency, of accident. This denies the deep structures which are so important in explaining the oppression and the misery, these deep but demi-realities, because they are structures constituted by false consciousness, but real; it denies these deep realities which explain the ills of humanity.

I believe the thing about Althusser is that he did not clearly thematise ontology. This is the first point that I would object to. The first thing you have got to do is to bring out the absent concept, the concept which is missing. The second thing about Althusser is a failure to situate a coherent totality. Because you have the problem of science and of ideology, science becomes eternal ideology, becomes a-historical, eternal. Where is the motor, where is the generative mechanism? If you situate ontology you

have a chance of employing notions like generative structures, transformative change, you have a notion of ontological depth and of transformative praxis within a totality that we constitute. He had the moment of structure all right, but these structures were disconnected, he was still imbued with purely positivist, extensionalist thinking. There is so much one could say about dialectic that I have gone into in my book. It is a very radical and holistic way of thinking. It literally shatters the foundations of statistics thoroughly enough. It is not surprising that a great Marxist epistemologist like him did not get to the secret of dialectic. You need all these concepts to get to the secrets of dialectic. He basically detotalises and parcellizes the social totality into discrete elements, he does not show mechanisms of change, and dislocates structures from the praxis which reproduces or transforms them. I think this is the problem with Althusser, and you can see this in the conundrum of science and ideology. What he does is science, what other people have done is ideology, there is no connection between the two. That is a classic stance of an absurd philosophy which he inherited.

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The question concerns the platinum plate, and the thesis that links idealist or irrealist philosophies with societies characterised by master–slave relationships. These terms seem very general, and the question revolves around the problem of what sort of things we can do today in a more specific way, differently from someone like Rorty who makes those very similar general errors. Is there something more specific?

Roy: I think one can see in Rorty's work huge splits. What is not mentioned, post-structuralist mention. So, questions of class and exploitation, to use classical Marxist terms, are detotalised; Eastern philosophy is not mentioned, the North–South divide is not mentioned, so they are detotalised; women are sort of added on as a fragment at the end, he becomes interested in women. It becomes a sort of compromise formation. What you see in the platinum plate analogy is a split between intellectuals and the

world, disconnection. He says the world consists of atoms and the void, which is an absurd ontology; the world is so rich, so deep, so multilayered, so highly differentiated, so variegated, containing so many interesting and complex and horrible, but also exciting, and joyous phenomena, that to attempt to situate them all using the concept of atoms and the world is absurd. And then we philosophers engage in conversational hermeneutics, which means polite discourse, and then other social scientists presumably do the same. It means that he and his friends are somehow in a sort of Platonic realm above and disconnected from the world.

This is surely how academic life represents itself. If you did a critique of the demi-reality, the half-light reality, the twilight reality of academic life, that is the sort of way you would start. Humanity is in crisis, how many academics actually talk about the crisis of humanity, what are the causes of this crisis? How many academics see themselves as part of the crisis of humanity? See their own role in the reproduction of thought systems, which go to reify or voluntarise that reality? Both of these are equally bad mistakes. It is equally mistaken to think that social reality is independent of human beings as to think that a single human being can wake up one morning and change it himself or herself. That is the sort of thing we should be doing.

We should certainly be looking at the output of academic discourse and we should be using that as a tool to situate that academic discourse, those academics, ourselves, reflexively within it. Because we are not immune to these irrealist categorial structures, and there is no question of infallibilism here, so they may affect critical realism itself. But, to follow that up, I would say that critical realism is part of a progressive dialectical learning process, which can begin to correct itself like the sciences, but we situate all this in the context of a totality which explains it. What is crucial here is the concept of ideology, I think, and I would like to see three kinds of criteria firmly established. Ideologies are systems and practices and realities which are false, which can be explained by the critique of ideology which involves the retroductive argument characteristic of science, the transcendental argument characteristic of philosophy, and a lot of social

science in virtue of the hermeneutical moment in social science and the dialectical argument characteristic of ideology critique. Dialectical argument is just a form of the general kind of scientific reasoning in which the reality we identify is false, real but false, and we describe that false reality as correctly as we can. So see how we need an all-embracing notion of totality, an ontology, which allows us to make these distinctions. Ideologies are false realities, they are explicable in terms of ideology critique, which involves dialectical argumentation and category mistakes. This is where the philosopher has a distinctive role, the philosopher whether as social scientist or whether as 'professional philosopher'. I think you can see these demi-realities at work in a lot of social scientific discourse: the Weberian concept of an iron cage in which we are trapped and we are motivated to ever increasingly rationalize ourselves. So many deep social scientist and philosophers, like Hume and Wittgenstein, ended up in tragic positions.

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Question regarding Roy's work and its relation to Habermas's work.

Roy: I think that Habermas is an immensely important theorist, I think that his early theories, speech action, and his later theory of discourse, actually presuppose a realist account of language, something like Chomsky's realism. He actually presupposes for his rational reconstructions of a linguistic capacity, that they are capacities, that they are real, that there are generative structures, the ideal speech situation and the other constructs that he uses normatively presuppose real possibilities of consensual discourse. All that involves ontology, and I think the contradictory intentions there derive from his failure to thematise ontology. When he tries to rationally reconstruct Marxism he would be able to understand and criticise Marx's theory much better if he had a notion of ontological depth. That is my feeling about Habermas. What I say about the value side is that we both believe that speech action presupposes emancipation. I show how, through the logic

of dialectical universalisability the ideal society presupposes human emancipation. That is a presupposition of speech action. But he has no mechanism to show how we can get from the facts of social life to a better society in a rational way. Because he does not have the other side of the ethical argument which is the entailment of values by facts. One of the things I tried to show is that understanding misery or error or categorial error leads, of necessity, to making a negative evaluation on that error and to attempting to build a positive theory of the conditions under which it is transformed. In other words, I argue that it is possible to go from facts to values. We both agree that speech action presupposes the good, or a good and freer society, presupposes human emancipation, but I have an argument to the effect that we can move naturalistically in that way, from fact to value, that values need not be question of arbitrary choice.

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Question.

Roy: The capitalist is forced to observe the laws of Marxian political economy. These demi-realities are sustained by realities, which are there. If you like, what we have got to do is throw off the chains of illusion. These categorial structures are there and Marx shows how, in my opinion, a socialist society or a better society is presupposed by capitalism as its dialectical outcome and its necessary condition. In the earliest critical realist accounts the stratification of reality went hand in hand with the differentiation of reality, they are two parts of the same thing. We are living in open systems which contain a multiplicity of structures and agents, we are living in a sort of mish-mash world. This is precisely why scientists need experimental closures, why they need to absent themselves from the topsy turvy nature of all ordinary life and go into the laboratory and set up an artificially controlled experiment. The differentiation of reality is just as dialectically necessary a part of the thematics of critical realism as a stratification of reality, they go hand in hand. So, I think, in no way is critical realism vulnerable to post-structuralist critique, that

it abolishes differences. I think the working class is tremendously heterogeneous, everyone is different. What we do in dialectical critical realism is that we have a notion of dialectical universalisability which is completely different from abstract universalisability. There is a universal component in it, but then there are always particular mediations, there is a geo-historic rhythmic to it, aid each element in a situation is an idiosyncratic particular. Perhaps the same reality never occurs twice. Nietzsche formulated the doctrine of the eternal recurrence. He was very close to saying you can never get the same thing twice. Everything is always slightly different, and that is what is entailed in the concepts of dialectical universalisability and concrete singularity. Let me give you an example of this. This means that in so far as Marxism implies socialism, then we would understand what this means: we are in favour of equity not equality, we do not believe in uniformity, we do not believe in treating everyone the same because everyone is different, we treat everyone according to their differences. Where the differences are the same then they are treated the same. And that means, women, for example, can be treated differently from men according to norms of equity.

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Question.

Roy: Immigrants is another category which is excluded. They are excluded in lots of senses. They are excluded from the academic discourse, they are excluded from the electoral process, they are excluded from benefits, etc. Nothing is so appalling about western thought as its US-centric bias. When you talk about a global culture, it is the globalisation, it is the scientistic export of capitalism and 'western ideology' that goes with it. I believe that eastern thought, to take your example, has enormous resources for radicalising tradition and social change. I am working on it. I am working on an attempt at unifying eastern and western philosophy. I find that eastern philosophy is a very important critical resource.

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Question: Clarifying the golden nugget. How can positive contraries be transmitted into negative sub-contraries, and how can practice and theory transform reality?

Roy: What happens is that one has an inconsistency, one has an error. If this inconsistency is widely held, then it must be explained in terms of something missing, something absent from the categorial structure. All error is rooted in the absence of something or other or, truistically, something which would correct the error. In scientific and social totalities what is absent is often a level of depth, or a category of people in the social world or relations. For example, in vulgar versions of Marxism there is no dialectic of nature, of the inter-play between nature and humanity; nature is treated in a Promethean way, as a sheer other of humanity. There are no subtle connections, no symbiosis. One would attempt to reconstitute an ecologically sensitive Marxism by building in the symbiosis between humanity and its natural environment and showing the way in which capitalism is destroying it. And once one has reconstituted that totality one could then use it and develop concepts of four-planar social being, in which I tried to show how we are set in a natural environment. Everything that we do in society is in a natural context. When we do that, then we can change our practice. We can change our practice in such a way that we behave in an ecologically sensitive way, or we can make arguments against capitalism on the way in which it is spoiling our natural environment. So we have built up a bigger totality, we have allowed it to inform our transformative action.

Patently there was something wrong with 'actually existing socialism'. When I said that Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production was fundamentally correct, I did not mean that Marxism was complete. Marxism is very far from complete. It contains huge lacunae, and it is our job, in so far as we identify with Marxism as a research and political programme, to identify its lacunae, to identify its tensions and weaknesses and to remedy them as Marx would have by recourse to a greater totality.

The theory of surplus value is an elaborate account to show how the whole pre-history of political economy up to his day

could be situated within the context of Marx's own categories. So it is by transcendence to a greater totality that we remove the tensions and contradictions in our thought, which allow more effective and coherent political action, and therefore allow a greater possibility of transforming the world in a better way. This is not just a cognitive dialectic, because what sets off the feeling that something is inadequate in our theory is a human need like suffering, hunger, something like that. And that itself is an absence, a want, a desire, which we cannot fulfil, which makes us enquire into the causes of the non-fulfilment of that want or desire, which leads us into the train of social scientific theory which sets us into this cognitive dialectic and then we fit it into political practice. But within the political sphere similar learning processes should operate. Political associations and parties should learn from the mistakes, and in so far as they are Marxists, of actually existing socialism, actually existing Marxist parties.

I think one of the reasons for the popularity of the politics of identity and difference is the fact that actually existing socialism and most socialist parties are operated according to a command structure characteristic of instrumental, manipulative modes of reasoning and according to norms of abstract rather than dialectical universality. The masses, or the people or the party members, were set over on the one side, and then there was the elite of the executive, the politbureau, on the other side. The politbureau manipulated the members that carried out instructions. And this is mimicking the mode of reasoning of capitalist society. And this is why, and this is coming back to the point of the platinum plate, the politics of identity and difference is so popular amongst men of, broadly speaking, our generation. Because so many people have found the politics of actually existing socialism inadequate, they look for an a-political way out of a political problem.

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Question: Something concerning subjective discourses and absence.

Roy: I think there is a growing acceptance of intersubjectivity. The question is: do the theorists give these intersubjectivities a

right in contemporary social theory into subjectivity as often modelled on discourse? And this can be very dangerous because there are lots of things that the discourse paradigm leaves out. For example, we are having a conversation and we see a peasant digging the ground, and this was said to me by quite a famous philosopher: 'The first thing we should do is ask the peasant what he is doing, and the peasant would tell us he is digging the ground, and that is all we can say'. 'No', I said, 'we can ask him who is paying him, and why is he digging the ground, how does he keep his family by digging the ground, under whose instructions, on the basis of whose authority is he digging the ground, is it his autonomous reaction or not?'

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Question: Elaborate the concept of negation.

Roy: To negate is to absent and thereby transform. All praxis is transformative. Your question was transformative of the situation. It depends upon negation, it was an act, and all acts negate, they negate the status quo, they negate what is given. Negating what is given is transforming it, transforming it is absenting something which is already there and making present something which was not there. In a dialectic, it is quite common for a factor to be absented.

Let us take the paradigm of science. When scientists decide that that factor is not all that important after all, it is completely played down, and then, at a later stage of the development of science, one just forgets about some domain of phenomena. At a yet later stage in the development of science one finds something analogous to that phenomenon, and it needs to be reincorporated in the totality. That is the model of the dialectic and the negation of the negation.

But it is too crude to think of it as a restoring. It is not a simple restoration, it is a restoration under change of descriptions. If you believe, as I sought to believe, in primitive communism I think, actually poverty, scarcity, many things are a product of capitalism. I would like to believe in primitive communism, and I think if

one can sort of believe in primitive communalism then you can see the whole history of master–slave society, money relationships building up to capitalism, the negation of the ideals, the bones of primitive communism, and then you can say some future society is the negation of that negation. But it will not be the restoration of primitive communism it will be a vastly differentiated, hopefully much richer society than we have ever known before.

Capitalism, and all class society, all master–slave society may be the negation of primitive communism, if and when communism becomes actually existing, then it will not be the restoration of primitive communism. It may be the restoration of some bones that were torn aside or completely occluded by capitalism. I would not place too much reliance on the formula of the negation of the negation. It is negativity, the continual process of negation that I see as all-important.

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Question: (Ricardo) Wittgenstein, spontaneous dialectics.

Roy: I think that the rational kernel of dialectic was a general theory of learning processes and the learning processes are operated in all rounds of social life.

We are saying there are parts of reality which transcend language. That surely is correct, but that is not a normal interpretation of linguistic philosophy, and is not the normal interpretation of Wittgenstein, who seems to be tied to the position that the limits of my world are the limits of my language, the identification of language and the world which I call the 'linguistic fallacy'. I think it is wrong to identify language and the world, or it is wrong to posit a one-to-one correlation between language and the world. The world existed before any languages, it exists outside, including the social world which exists outside language. We have experiences which we cannot describe linguistically and we act as totalising transformative beings, materially embodied with some linguistically articulated understanding of what we are doing, but only a limited understanding. The dialectic is to

enrich that limited understanding and to act in more totalising progressive ways towards the goal of universal human emancipation, which I believe to be implicit in the most primitive need or want. So I think we are basically agreeing or perhaps you can tell me where you disagree with what I said.

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Question: Further question from Ricardo.

Roy: I certainly believe in the priority of praxis but philosophy, understanding, science, are also practices, discourses itself is a practice, everything is a practice in the totality of practices. I do not think one can escape from concepts like totality by relying on the concept of practice itself. We are all willy-nilly acting, the question is whether we are acting correctly, whether we are acting to transform ourselves and society in a better or a worse way. Questions about the value of our action, its truth or adequacy, come in the very moment you pose the question of practice. The whole essence of critical thought is to subject yourself to the possibility that you may be acting incoherently or less than fully coherently, or less than fully adequately, or you may be failing to satisfy your and others' needs.

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Question: What is the social world made of?

Roy: I would like to look at the social world in this way: there are four planes of social being which ordinate it (the social world). There are material transactions with nature, so the social world is constituted by nature; there are inter-personal relations between agents, that is the sort of thing that is going on now, discourse between us; underlying those there are social structures which pre-exist us and form the conditions of possibility of our actions. Such things as languages, modes of production, modes of political practice, those are social structures which provide the conditions, the means and materials for our transactions

with nature and with each other. And then there is the depth stratification of the personality, of the psyche, of the individual, and in principle collective human subject.

There is also a dimension of collective human agency and institutions and practices; that can be reconstructed from the others, I think. So, these are the four planes. If we attempt to exclude nature from society, or attempt to reduce society to interpersonal relations, or we attempt to reconstitute society from our depth stratification (the unconscious, all the other levels of our psyche, etc.), if we leave out social structures, or if we only have social structures and we leave out nature or inter-personal relations, then we are in a situation of absence, dialectically erroneous absence. What we are forced to do in reality is rely on an implicit totality to cover up mistakes until they became too glaring.

And then we will isolate the absence and remedy it by recourse to a greater totality, and that at the moment seems to me to be a good general schema for understanding society. I think the distinctions you made between first- and second-order interpretations is fine; I mean it posits the possibility of critique, but that distinction is anyway implicit in any speech action, any human interaction between us two now. I can do a critique of you without standing above our relationship, and certainly all communication embodies elements of first- and second-order levels. If we did not differ about something, there would be no point in communicating. If we felt, acted and believed exactly in the same way there would be nothing to do. It is the differences, the second-order component, that makes communication so interesting, quid indeed ultimately necessary. So, I do no like that conceptualisation, although I understand it at a logically and relatively primitive level, but I actually thing it is implicit in all speech action. It is the difference between monitoring our behaviour and being able to reflexively monitor the monitoring of our behaviour, the capacity for second-order stepping back from consciousness. Four planar social being I think is the minimum necessary to constitute an adequate totality. Then we have to put the whole thing in motion as process and the whole thing depends upon, and presupposes, social practices.

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Question: About social structure.

Roy: Our discourse about it is an interpretation. Agents themselves have their own interpretations. When I talk, about reality, I am not assuming we have any privileged access to it. I am saying that any statement I would want to make, that any statement we make about reality is fallible. That statement is itself real and purports to be about reality. So our mistakes are real. I am not trying to deny that the social world is constituted in part by conceptualisation and interpretation. I am trying to give a very radical interpretation by saying that interpreted structures, what the tradition that I am attacking calls interpreted structures, must be seen as categories, some of which are false and are inherent to reality itself. You can have any interpretative schema you want, but if you go to a shop and try and buy a newspaper the only interpretative schema that counts is money. That is the interpretative schema intrinsic to our society. You can think of it as having a pleasant conversation with the newsagent, or you can be interested in the newsagent's daughter, or buying his premises. You can have a lot of meanings. The totalities we construct in social life are all differentiated, they are asymmetrical. The dominant one would be the financial exchange; you pass the money to him or he will not let you have the newspaper. That is the constraint, that is the dominant structure at work in that relationship, the structure of money.

We are all actors, we are always actors. You can step out of the totality, exclude yourself from it and then describe it as an observer or participant; that is certainly true.

But if there are real relations between you and that totality, then you are going to make a categorical error, you are going to be false to the reality at work. For example, you can, say: 'I am an academic, I am an observer, I am not concerned with such things as money or material structures'. But then what happens if your grant does not come through? Sooner or later that categorial structure will catch up with you. The world is increasingly englobed by very basic, very crude structures which have become disembedded from any possibility of voluntaristic conscious choice. So if we as philosophers or academics exclude ourselves

from the totality, we can do that up to a point; but when we leave our study we are back in the reality that we have denied, and that is doing a disservice to the norm of truth.

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Question.

Roy: The reality we are trying to explain pre-exists any agent's interpretations. The agent is interpreting the situation. They are interpreting the situation which pre-exists them, which constrains them, and which in large part limits or empowers their possibilities of action, and unless they understand that structure, they are going to act erroneously. If you talk about the conceptually dependent nature of social structures, that is correct. But I think there is a philosophical difference between us, which is that you are not accepting categorial realism. You do not accept that categories such as money, such as the categories of race and racism, such as the categories of class and class structure, such as the categories of master–slave society, all these categories are intrinsic to reality as much as the categories of causality, space, time, substance, process, inter-relation.

They are all part of reality. It is fine to have an interpretation which is distinct from those categories, or to have a very radical interpretation, but the question is: can you leave it out? Where is the unity of theory and practice? What you are failing to do, I think, if you adopt a purely Kantian interpretative approach, is that you are failing to satisfy the reflexive criterion of philosophy, which is the capacity to situate and to sustain your own content, your own conditions of possibility of being. You are sitting on a tree and you are sawing the branch off as you do so. This is clearly what most academics do when they do not concern themselves with material structures. They think: 'we are sitting in the library and we are not worried with human suffering or human oppression or such a brute thing as money. And then of course their careers and their actual activities are entirely driven by motives which are related to money—they are living a contradiction.

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Question: Merleau-Ponty and phenomenology.

Roy: You can tie Merleau-Ponty's remark to the Gibsonian ecological approach to perception, which is: when I come into a room and I see a chair, I do not see it as an exclusively material object. Rather I see it as something I can sit on, I see it as an affordance for sitting. We perceive the world in terms of the affordances it endows us for our human needs and wants. We go into the world, with certain pre-structured, categorially necessary presuppositions—in this case because of our biological constitution and our stage of geo-historical development, which makes us sit rather than squat. If we were in a different continent or a thousand years ago we probably would be squatting. Where I disagree with Merleau-Ponty, is that it is a geo-historical product, the different ways of perceiving things are geo-historical products.

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Question: In relation to the concept of the unity of theory and practice, and theory as guiding practice, in relation to what Ricardo said, this concept of spontaneous dialectics. At this moment in human history there is nothing more important than grasping the dialectics of nature, that nature is itself dialectical. But this should not be confused with the spontaneous dialectics which leaves our own concept at a primitive, immediate level. Surely, as we develop our own dialectical concepts, this is a process of reflection, we are penetrating deeper in the dialectical nature of nature. There is different strata, so it is true that this real nightmare that happened to materialist dialectics, was this terrible dialectical materialism which was this sterile schema that was developed in the Soviet Union. We should not allow that to prevent us from trying to re-establish that sort of man and nature, dialectical man reflecting dialectical nature.

Roy: I agree with that entirely. I believe nature without humanity contains almost all the categories of the dialectic. One of the things that it does not contain is conceptually dependent, categorial error, because that is a human construct, which I think is closely related to the establishment of master–slave relationships, class

society, exploitative exchange, money and manipulative forms of reasoning. Apart from that, it contains almost all the categories of dialectic, including inter-related totality, etc. Take our ordinary concept of an event. An event is just a single happening. But in biology and physics we have to think of an event as consisting in a distribution over space or a succession over time. It is far too simplistic, our ordinary notion of an event, it is undialectical, it is undialectical for society and it is undialectical for nature, it is modelled on an atom, on a sort of atomic billiard ball, and the simple movement of the billiard ball or simple sort of material-object levels of reality which is so resonant with bourgeois modes of thought. All the categories, absence, negation, transformation (not transformative praxis, and not conceptually categorial error, and it is odd to say that reality itself is false although you can say reality itself is only implicitly fully developed), apply to nature. And we have to understand our relationship with nature as being intrinsically dialectical.

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Questioner: Mind changes nature, human beings change nature . . .

Roy: And nature is going to revenge itself on humanity unless humanity treats nature with much greater respect.

Chapter Three

Critical Realism and Discourse Theory: Debate with Ernesto Laclau*

Ernesto

. . . It is difficult to provide . . . a direct, clear comparison between the theoretical approach of discourse theory and that of critical realism. Discourse theory is something which is embedded in 'scientific'—whatever that means—practice, which is the analysis of text: in the strict, narrow sense of the term it is a set of methodological rules for the analysis of text. Critical realism, on the other hand, is a whole ontology with some kind of epistemological consequences. So the first thing we have to do is see how we can establish a terrain on which a comparison of the two approaches is possible. Now discourse theory, as it has been developed here in Essex, not only by myself, but by a group

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* *Alethia*, September 1998.

This is an edited version of a debate which was held at the University of Essex at the suggestion of students in the Department of Sociology. Each speaker was allowed half an hour with ten minutes to reply. As the transcript was somewhat defective, we have sometimes aimed to supply the gist rather than the literal record of what was said. The spoken has also sometimes been altered to conform more to the canons of the written word. A lengthy discussion which followed the debate has been omitted.

of people working with the same type of approach, involves definitely some ontological assertions and some epistemological assertions, so I'm going to do a bit of violence to our work in order to find a terrain on which a comparison is possible.

I would say that from this more general point of view there are four principles which are central to discourse theory. First, there is the assumption that there is a basic grammar within which possible objects are constituted and that this mediates any kind of contact with reality. This grammar, which is what we call discourse, is largely unconscious. Just as you speak your native language before you learn its grammar and the task of the grammarian is to bring out the immanent grammatical structure which constitutes that language, so the task of the discourse analyst is to explore the immanent grammars which underlie all kinds of meaningful intervention.

In the second place, by discourse we should not understand simply speech and writing, i.e. there is nothing specifically linguistic about it. The notion of language has been submitted to sustained critique over the last thirty years and as a result the specificity of an object which was called language in the strict sense has largely dissipated, and language on the other hand is a dimension which constitutes any possible experience. For instance, Wittgenstein's notion of a language game is not involved only in a linguistic dimension; it is a combination of linguistic elements and the action in which these elements are embedded, and the resulting totality of words and actions is what he called a language game. This is precisely what we call discourse. This enlargement of the notion of discourse is largely a result of the increasing formalisation of structural linguistics, a process whereby linguistic structures have become less and less dependent on the materiality, the 'substance', of speech and writing. And it is in this sense that discourse is a relational system which can be applied to any possible object.

In the third place, what we have insisted on is that the pluralisation of objects on which discursive practice operates means that we cannot remain at a purely constative level, for the performative dimension is inherent to any linguistic operation. So that action is something which is entirely inherent to discourse. The notion

of discourse could, if you prefer, be replaced by that of practice. I myself prefer to speak of discourse for two reasons. First, by arriving at this point in which practice and discourse become almost synonymous, through the whole set of steps involving the linguistic derivation, we reveal some aspects of these practical discursive structures which would not be evident otherwise. More frivolously, practice is a very neutral term, i.e. it is unlikely to provoke the indignation of anybody, and concepts which do not provoke the engagement of people are necessarily boring. In order to get some kind of excitement and enjoyment, I prefer the term discourse.

Finally, discourse theory is opposed to various forms of ontology and epistemology, but the main philosophical approach it is opposed to is idealism. Now, while idealism is a conception which presents historically a variety of features, there are essentially two features which I regard as central. First, the reduction of the real to thought. For example, if I am asserting in an old realist way that there is an equation between thought and the thing, what I am saying is that there is a basic identity between thought and thing, and this reduction of the material elements to something which is ultimately the universal form is exactly the essence of all idealism. Now, in so far as discourse analysis sustains the irreducibility of the real to discourse, it tries to break from this point of view with the idealist tradition. The second aspect is that if idealism means something, it means the unity of the mind, the unity of the subject; that is to say, the unity of apperception, of the 'I' which accompanies all my representations—this is something which belongs to the essence of idealism. Now, it is precisely the category of the subject which is put under threat by discourse theory, because there is a plurality of subject formation which cannot be reduced to any single unit.

If I present the argument in these terms, what are the points of convergence and divergence with critical realism? I think there are two basic points of convergence. The first is the critique of empiricism, that is to say the analysis according to which the problem of induction and the problem of what has been called transduction are irresolvable for it; the reduction of ontology to epistemology in the end begs the whole question. The second lies in what we call the transcendental term; that is to say, we are

dealing with a transcendental realism, not with any kind of direct ontological realism. Here, however, is where my difficulty with some of the positions of critical realism starts, because the way in which the transcendental is understood creates immediately some problems for me.

I would say that the main bone of contention between a discourse theorist and a critical realist, beyond all the agreement, is the distinction between the transitivity and intransitivity of objects. I have no quarrel with the notion of transitivity, if that would differentiate critical realism from any naïve theory about the direct apprehension of the object in thought; rather with the concept of intransitivity. Some problems that emerge for me are the following. Firstly, the intransitivity of objects in the work of Roy is alluded to rather than ultimately defined, or he even speaks of structure, about generative mechanism, casual powers, and so on. But obviously these are not synonymous, each of them has specific theoretical consequences, and the theoretical consequences have not been entirely worked out. So what about the transcendental term and its relation to the intransitivity of the object? In the first place, the non-transcendental solution is excluded by critical realism. That is to say, well OK, all my representations are variable approximations and so on and so forth, but there is something, which is the intransitivity of the object, which is there and which has a structure of its own which I cannot determine at least a priori and in some basic dimensions. This would be a dogmatic approach, because why exclude from the transitive variation this object which is beyond the realm of transitivity? But the argument Roy's presenting obviously is not that, it is not the dogmatic argument, it is an argument which passes through transcendentality. The question he is trying to ask is how the world has to be if science is going to be possible. That is to say, he takes from Kantian transcendentalism the more general form of a transcendental argument, although he does not follow Kant all the way though.

Now it is the factual character of science that for me is at stake, for Kant is clear that the factum of knowledge was not put into question and once the factum of knowledge was there, the problem was how to establish the conditions of possibility of that

which existed, how synthetic a priori arguments are possible in physics and mathematics. (The factum of morality was also the starting point for the second *Critique*.) This presents for me a set of problems. In the first place, to what extent can science as a factum be there as a totality in which there is no plurality of scientific discourses, each of which have conditions of possibility which are very differentiated between themselves? To what extent can we work with this notion of science as a total unified code?

Secondly, the question which I don't think is asked here is whether science is possible in its own terms. What if we adopted, for instance, a pragmatist or a conventionalist view—which is not exactly my position—and said, 'Well, our discourse—the scientific discourses—is not something that is anchored in anything that is the object in itself.' For instance, Husserl was trying to put the conditions of possibility of scientific activity by inscribing it within the whole life world and the whole experience of the transcendental subject. In some sense the conditions of possibility of science are there from the very beginning. Now let us suppose that I ask, what are the conditions of possibility for astrology, which is also a factum? Why am I going to accept a discourse of physics instead of a discourse of astrology? Now I can immediately establish the conditions of possibility of astrology in a set of ontological considerations about the way in which the world has to be for astrology to be possible. But why this discourse is not accepted is not because it is incoherent in itself, it is simply because our experience is organised in a set of discursive sequences which are incompatible with the presuppositions of this ontology. In the same way, scientific discourses in the contemporary sense of the term are much more credible because they are able to hegemonise a field of experience which is much wider than the discourse of astrology, but these discourses are all the time changing. For instance, let us suppose for the sake of argument that I can falsify a scientific prediction on the basis of a factual observation. What this factual sequence is, is a set of other discourses in which facts are constituted. The point is that the plurality of these discourses is not unified, anchored in a coherent whole; there is no unity of science as conceived within logical positivism. Scientific discourses, as critical realism accepts, are

changing all the time, and there is no way of anchoring the change in something that is beyond this world of discursive variation. This is not relativism, because the plurality of discourses constituting or organising my experience is a plurality which is simply the elaboration of my relation to the world, it is not a mental product, discourses are simply anchoring institutions organising a set of experiences, and in a sense meaning is the most material of the dimensions of reality. On the other hand, the world that is organised in this way is only one of the possible ones, the world of science is constituted on the basis of eliminating a variety of dimensions in the object. Now, this intransitivity of objects which is supposed to be behind all experience as the ground of all the regularities in experience is simply one more discourse which cannot be conceded to be different in quality from the discourses which are seen as transitive. I would accept the hypotheses of critical realism, but I would integrate this notion of the intransitivity of the object as one more discursive element, so that the intransitivity of the object is in itself transitivity.

Let me say something about social theory. In the first place, I see critical realism, not as something that discourse theory would reject entirely, but as one of the possibilities for discursively constructing the real. However, these possibilities are, I think, much wider than what critical realism accepts as some sort of final ontology. For instance, if we pass to the social world and a problem like the limits of naturalism which has been central in the discussions of critical realism, it is not at all a problem that could have been posed in those terms in discourse theory. For naturalism is some form of discursive constitution of the object, which in this sense refers to a deeper possibility which is the discursive field constituting the basic grammar of society. In the same way, problems such as holism and individualism are problems which are going to be put in different ways by critical realism and by discourse theory. I share with critical realism the rejection of methodological individualism and the holistic approach to the social, but I would say that this social whole, this structural whole which constitutes society, is by definition incomplete, and this incompletion gives place to a set of practices by which the unity that society is unable to reach at the level of the structural is going to be

reconstituted at the level of the imaginary. One of the basic assertions of discourse theory is that totality is not a ground but a horizon in the phenomenological sense. It is through this necessary incompletion of the social whole that I would approach the problem of agency and structure. It cannot be solved via the universalisation of either of these two categories, nor is it going to be solved via any kind of easy structuration which puts together things which are conceptually incompatible. It is going to be solved only if we accept that the problem of incompatibility between agency and structure is not a problem of our theory but a problem inscribed in social reality itself.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the question which for us as discourse theorists is essential, which is the question of negativity and antagonism. I do not see exactly with what conception of antagonism—something which is negative in itself and which cannot be retrieved by any form of positivity—a naturalistic conception of the social could work. However, I could see, for instance, Hegelian dialectics as one way of reducing the disruptive character of the negative to a certain principle of unity because the dialectical movement operates only in one way and any contingency is eliminated from this. So for us antagonism, for reasons I have presented elsewhere, is constitutive of the social, not as the result of empirical reason but for formal logical reasons. Social totality, being necessary, cannot however constitute itself. In this sense, the basic argument that I have presented is that antagonism is not something internal to society but is actually the moment in which social objectivity finds its ultimate limit. Now, I don't see that critical realism at this point has developed a notion of antagonism and negativity, but anyway it is something about which I would like to have the response of Roy, as to the many other issues that I covered.

Roy

Basically I had prepared a talk. Instead I am going to construct my remarks around Ernesto's. As far as I could see, Ernesto talked about three main topics, the first ontology, he brought up some nice distinctions, the second about the nature of social theory,

and the third about negativity. And I think the third point is just—pardon me for saying so, Ernesto—wrong. I have written two very big books, *Dialectic* and *Plato Etc.*, which are concerned precisely to hammer away at what I think is the fundamental failing of western philosophy, which is to give only a positive account of being, a thesis I call ontological monovalence, and I assert the priority of negativity, the priority of absence over presence, and I define dialectic in terms of absence. . . . I think this is one of the strongest points of that development of critical realism over the last couple of years, dialectical critical realism. It does mark a break from the first phase of development, but I do not think we are vulnerable to your attacks on that ground.

Secondly, I quite agree with what you say about totalities, but it is one of the themes of critical realism that totalities must be open. We are entirely against any premature closure of social reality. Social totalities, all totalities, are open, and the myth of a closed totality, a closed system, is an empiricist idealist ideology. There is no such thing. And I like your remarks that totality is a horizon, not a ground, except that I also want grounds; so there are aspects of totality that can be totalities recursively embedded within other totalities, and one totality can function as a ground for another. But the fundamental thing that totalities are open is absolutely correct.

So on the question of totality, but not of absence and negativity, I am completely at one with where Ernesto wants to go. If he wants to talk about the negative, that's fine. I think the social world is structured around concepts of contradiction, absence, dialectic. I think Hegel did a tremendous disservice to the dialectic in his actual practice. He is ontologically monovalent. This was one of Marx's great insights and also of course of Left Hegelianism, that you cannot do that sort of conjuring trick on reality, the world. There are four terms of the critical realist dialectic—you remember the Hegelian dialectic has the terms of identity, negativity and totality. In the critical realist dialectic we have the concepts of non-identity (I am going to take you up on what you said about transitivity and intransitivity)—non-identity between beings and things, between causal laws and constant conjunctions of events, between structures and events, between

the real and the actual, and the actual and the empirical, between the positive and the negative. This is a constant refrain, a critical refrain in critical realism. The second moment of negativity we have already discussed. This is the crucial one, in terms of the ontological power of absence over presence, because this is due to the nature of the negative. The third moment is totality, which we have seen is open. The fourth moment, which is completely lacking in Hegelian dialectic, or at the end is lacking, is transformative practice. Transformative practice will ensure that history never comes to an end. Even if we succeed in blowing up the planet, there will be some kind of processes going on at the end.

So much for the two points that I don't think should be in dispute between us, about totality and negativity. I think there are matters of substance in relation to ontology. Now what is ontology? Ontology is the theory of being. Now a whole tradition in western philosophy has tried to reduce being to knowledge, to epistemology, and I think from Ernesto's remarks he is against this tradition. So he actually does want an ontology. Now what I think is absolutely crucial is that this tradition—the basic form of western philosophy—was anthropocentric. To get away from this anthropocentricity is one of my motivations in actually trying to thematise the character of extra-discursive reality. I am making things very simple before we get on to transcendental arguments, but we believe in the possibility and actuality of a world without human beings, and therefore without discourse. What critical realism says is that we can actually say something about the general character of that world, we can say that it must be structured, differentiated, open, governed by laws which are transfactual, constituted by its own kind of contradictions and antagonisms, and without reason, intelligibility or discursive practice. How can we say all this? By transcendental arguments. Ernesto says there is an extra-discursive reality, we agree about that. Critical realism says that extra-discursive reality has a certain shape, and that it is very important to get its shape right. If you get it wrong, this is going to be implicitly secreted into your theory of knowledge. An example of this can be given from Habermas. Habermas does not believe in ontology at all, and he does not believe in positivism in respect of the human sciences.

Yet in his account of instrumental reason he assumes that the natural world is structured by constant conjunctions of events, and that causal laws can be reduced to empirical regularities, but that explanation in natural science proceeds by deductive subsumption. And all these things are false, not just for science, but actually ontologically false for the character of the world.

Ernesto is going to say to me, 'Well, what you are doing in your transcendental argument must be based on certain premises, what are your premises?' This is where the critical points become very important. I took as my initial premises experimental activity because there was a whole ideology of science—the empiricist ideology—which says that experimentation is the most important thing in science and that the one reason why we cannot do social science is because we cannot do experiments. It is a fact that the natural sciences, some natural sciences, can conduct experiments and they do attribute value to what they discover in experiments. So it is a reasonable move polemically and critically to argue against empiricism that they have got their analysis of what the world must be like for experiments to be possible wrong. Do I need to go through the analysis? It is basically that, in an experimental natural science the scientist sets up an artificially closed system; her artificial activity is necessary to gain an invariant conjunction, an empirical regularity—outside these closed systems we do not get such regularities. The significance of this activity is that what happens inside the experiment gives the scientist epistemic access to what happens outside it and what would happen outside it if the experiment had not been done. Let me give you an example. The law of gravity is tending to pull us down from the sixth floor of this building to the ground floor. This law is operating irrespective of the fact that countervailing forces are preventing it being manifest. It is part of a correct scientific description of the situation. So we have. a certain shape to the world, a certain shape for ontology is presupposed by experimental physics and chemistry. Is this position and presupposition, that we are intervening in nature and that nature has its own structures and transfactual character so unfamiliar to us? If, for example, we make a cup of tea and put some sugar in the tea, we expect it to dissolve; if it doesn't dissolve, we assume there must

be something in that tea which is preventing the sugar from dissolving, or the sugar must have some impurity. So it is not in fact all that arbitrary. I would argue that you can move from experimentation in physics and chemistry through to ordinary practices and see that they also presuppose the same general character of the world.

I would make certain claims that the world is structured, that it is governed by transfactual laws, that is by tendencies, that there are a multiplicity of mechanisms and structures at work, that the world is constituted by open systems, some of which are internally related to others, that discourse is a case of an efficacious mechanism which operates on the world and is embedded in the world, and the world impacts on discourse—this is perhaps another point that we would want to discuss more finely later. But I would say that the initial premises of transcendental realism from experimental activity were really to generate a critique of empiricism on its strongest grounds, and I think that critique is invincible and provides an adequate account of the experimental natural sciences. You could just stop there and say, 'Well, now we know what physicists and chemists assume about the world, we can make a more interesting contrast with the conditions of social science or of geology or biology, where they can't do experiments.' That is interesting enough in itself, but what I am suggesting is that when you argue from a transcendental premise you are arguing from something you have to believe. Undoubtedly, all transcendental arguments are going to be relativised to a premise, and I agree with Ernesto that in principle there are an infinite number of premises, there are an infinite number of practices. Experimentation of the classical sort is impossible in the domains of the very minute (quantum mechanics) and of the very large. So we could argue from some other aspect of scientific activity. So it is all going to be relativised to some form of activity, but then your practice in the world is going to implicitly assume a certain ontology. Let us take the case of Hume. Hume says we have no better grounds for going out of the second floor door than the second floor window. Isn't that absurd? In our practice we do—we must—make some sort of commitment. We may make it on the belief that Newton's theory

of gravity is right, or we may make it on some other more recondite belief but that is how we actually do act.

That is the first line of defence. If you don't want to use transcendental arguments to establish the general shape of the world from experimental and applied scientific activity as then possible in the experimental natural sciences, then you have to do so from some other, equally sound premise to act at all, to engage in any discursive practice. My second argument is that the shape of ontology that the experimental natural sciences presupposes is entirely continuous with what we can establish by transcendental arguments from very simple, mundane activities in the other sciences, in the arts, in everyday life.

What, then, of transcendental realism's assertion of the existence of an extra-discursive reality, given that we have discourses? Of course, in discussing the general shape of the world, the general kind of ontology, the character of ontology, the content of ontology, I am polemicising against Kant as much as anyone else. Your remember Kant said that we constitute a phenomenal world, but there is of course a real noumenal world behind that. I think in a way there is a tendency within Ernesto to want to say that we constitute a phenomenal world in our discourses, but of course we are not denying that outside those discourses there is something to which they can ultimately be referred. I am saying the character of this world can be known, it can be known by transcendental argument, relativised always to the conditions of possibility of some social practice. So we cannot have philosophy unless we also have discursive practices, but philosophy can tell us what the world would be like even if we did not have discursive practices. But what can philosophy tell us about a world in which we do have discursive practices?

This is where we come up against a dualism which is very familiar to philosophy, a whole set of dualisms: between mind and body, reasons and causes, the intelligible and the purely natural. I get a feeling—and I may be wrong—that part of the thrust of discourse analysis is falling in line with this dualism. What would discourse analysis be like if I was wrong? We would have to say that discourses, discursive practices, are in continual causal

interaction with the material world. That ideas are causally efficacious on the world, practices are causally efficacious on the world, and that the world itself is causally efficacious on practices. We can see the effect that global warming is having on our social practices, we can see the effect of years of neglect of the London transport system on social practices in London. Nature has a recoil, and I would argue that it is impossible to get at reasons irrespective of their material efficacy Let me take someone—Bill, will you hold up your hand? What has happened here is that I have given Bill a reason for doing something, I did it in virtue of my material effect on the world in issuing a sequence of sounds, Bill understood me hermeneutically and held up his hand; and that effected a change in the material world. I think that unless you allow that reasons are causes and that mind and body do interact—that society and discursive practices are embedded in nature and the biosphere—we end up with a philosophical dualism that is totally unacceptable. I am not saying Ernesto does this, but that I feel it is a tendency in his work and perhaps we will reach a point of agreement before the evening is out.

So instead of giving a long spiel about critical realism and discourse analysis, I have really just responded to Ernesto's points. I would just like to re-emphasise, first, that we need to know something about the general character of the world, we need to have a philosophical ontology, and the character of that ontology is crucially important for social practice as well as social theory. Secondly, where exactly do Ernesto and discourse analysis stand in relation to the causal interactions between discursive practices or reasons and extra-discursive realities? I accept of course that all extra-discursive realities are constituted within discursive practice, from the point of view of their intelligibility. But that is not to say that they are constituted in discursive practice from the point of view of their causal impact. We can assume that global warming went on long before we had the concept of it, and this is true. We come to the concept of most diseases long after they have their causal impact. So where does he stand on the causal interaction between discursive practices and things which are not at the moment discursively cognised or things which are clearly extra-

discursive or things which are part of a material world or things over which we have no material control like the cosmos? It is on these two points that we have honed down a nice difference.

Ernesto

We need a philosophical ontology, I absolutely agree. The point is, What is this philosophical ontology? For me, it is exactly everything which is constituted within discourse. . . . It is the level of constitution of any objectivity. In the case of natural science, which has precise conditions of possibility, these go back to a more basic ontology, which is what I call discourse (scientists would say scientific practice), and that it is able to constitute its object on the basis of regularities depends on sedimented social practices and a variety of discourses, and the constitution of its objects has discursive conditions of possibility which comes before.

Regarding your second point, I do not accept such a distinction between the discursive and the extra-discursive. You ask what is the effect of discourse on the external world, well, for me the external world is also discursively constituted, not in the sense that it is constituted by the mind of men, but in the sense that any kind of practice is embedded in the elaboration of the linguistic world. This involves at the same time interaction between subject and object, for if I am going there and I open the door, on the one hand I want to open the door, on the other this forces me to a material act, which is to open the door. The performance of that act is what I call discourse; it is not that discourse produces some kind of material effect, but that the material act of producing it is what discourse is. That is why, at the beginning, I insisted that the performative dimension is inherent in the discursive operation—it is not something that is added to it—and that is why I said that finally discourse and practice are a single category.

Obviously all practice, scientific or not, is based on some assumptions about the world. These assumptions can be perfectly contradictory. For example, in legal practice, we assume that punishment requires a free legal agent, that it was discussed with the agent who is responsible in committing some act or not. On the other hand, in scientific discourse we believe in universal

determinism. These two responses operate with assumptions about human beings which are totally at variance with each other, and there is no guarantee that there is some kind of unity that is going to put all these practices together. That is why I think any kind of practice, whether scientific or not, has to pass through the treadmill of making itself credible in front of a variety of other practices. I can easily construct a perfectly coherent discourse which has assumptions about the world—an implicit ontology and so on—but this discourse is not going to be accepted because it is coherent in its own terms, it is not going to be accepted because it clashes with many other discursive sequences which organise our world. So in this sense any kind of scientific practice, I would say, would have to be hegemonic, that is to say, it has to be proved in front of a tribunal which is constituted by a variety of other practices. My objection from this point of view to the notion of the intransitivity of the object is not that I do not believe that it is important for organising our practices, but the point is that, if you say about the intransitivity and transitivity of an object a set of things, these things are said on the basis of assumptions which are themselves challengeable, and in this sense, the very distinction between intransitivity and transitivity is itself transitive.

Roy

I think this is very interesting. I would like to make a series of distinctions between philosophical ontology and scientific ontology, quid between ontology and being. Now the subject matter of ontology has to be broadly conceived to include absence as well as presence, totality, internal relationality reasons, causes, whatever you like. Everything has being, and some things have being or exist quite independently of their constitution in scientific or philosophical discourse, and there is a distinction between these two. Once you accept that, it opens up the possibility of saying how the general character of the world is; you can use what you establish on the basis of a transcendental argument which is credible for you. Astrology obviously is not credible for you. Concerning your example of universal determinism and free will, I think the two are actually compatible, but I have argued that elsewhere.

What is the argument for ontology? The most basic argument is referential detachment. To refer to something, to say anything about the world, I must detach myself from that to which I refer. This is a function of all agency, all desire. If I desire water, I must detach the water from the desiring subject, this is the referent of my act of desire. Are you saying that no referents exist independently of their discursive constitution? If you are, I cannot agree with you. The world fifteen million years ago or the planet earth fifteen million years ago existed independently of its discursive constitution.

Ernesto

No quarrel.

Roy

No quarrel, OK. This is a point where you may quarrel. Did global warming exist prior to its discursive constitution? Did cancer exist before it was identified and discovered as a particular form of disease?

Ernesto

I am not saying that global warming did not exist independently of the discourse which called it global warming, because that would be absurd. What I am saying is that global warming is a way of classifying something which is there with. . . .

Roy

You admit that it is existentially intransitive with respect to discourse, but you then want to take it back to the level of the signifier or signified and say that this object only exists in my discursive constructions. In other words, you are contradicting yourself to say, 'Here, that thing has a reference independently of human beings', but at the same time you do not have a rigorous enough concept of reference, you are pulling the referent back to the level of the transitive, to its constitution in discourse.

Ernesto

My quarrel with you is not that.

Roy

Now, I would want to extend the category of reference to include causal laws, the general structure of causality, to include what I call transfactual efficacy.

Ernesto

There I would not agree.

Roy

All right, so you just want to enclose things. I would extend the category of reference so it would include open totality, I would extend it to include absences, I would extend it to include that aspiration to freedom which I think is implicit in our most element desires. So I want to make a huge claim for the intransitive dimension. I want to say that everything that I say about it is of course constituted in my discourse now, but that is at the level of the signifier and signified; at the level of the referent it either is or is not the case, or perhaps possibly is the case. We can give any epistemic value to that, but ontologically, either the earth had a certain shape fifteen million years ago, which is in some way captured in my discourse, or it didn't, or it didn't exist.

I think what is absolutely crucial, and what a lot of post-structuralist theory does not do, is to articulate the concept of what I call the semiotic triangle (not a concept unique to myself), that is to say, clearly distinguish the word, the signifier or the sentence, and its meaning or the signified, on the one hand, from the referent, on the other. And whether the referent exists or not is an interesting question, and it is not determined by the constitution in the transitive dimension of science of the signifier or signified.

Chapter Four

Critical Realism and Ethnomethodology: Debate with Rom Harré

The Ontology of Social Life*

ROY

Andrew Collier, in his book, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*, describes my first encounter with Rom Harré as intellectual love at first sight. I do not know whether I would go so far as that but there was an affinity and I was very grateful to have Rom as my supervisor. We were working on parallel lines. From the start I think we more or less saw eye to eye on the philosophy of natural sciences. His *Causal Powers* came out at the same time as my *A Realist Theory of Science*. *Causal Powers* consisted in a critique of the idea of the *sufficiency* of Humean and Popper–Hempelian criteria for laws, adequate explanation, etc., and *A Realist Theory of Science*'s innovation was a critique of their *necessity*. I was saying that Humeanism was not only just insufficient, but rather that it was actually false. I think my early upbringing as an economist helped me to come to the characterisation of the world as being an open

* Part I, SOAS, London, 7 November 1997.

system and thus supplementing the more formal critique of Rom. So we basically agreed about natural science but we have agreed to disagree in a friendly and mutually rewarding way for the last twenty or thirty years about the ontology of social life. That is why we are here together today because we have often been in such contexts and I at least have found our engagements fruitful.

I should perhaps start on a very positive note by noting some of the sort of permanent contributions of Rom's work in the philosophy of social science apart from its realism which I take as being read. I do not want to go through all his books but the most important in the area of the philosophy of the human sciences is the *Explanation of Social Behaviour*. This came out in 1972 when behaviourism and all forms of positivism were completely rampant and he had the striking notion that we should treat for scientific purposes people as if they were people, not some sort of dolled up machines. People were powerful particulars, the philosophy of social science we were both adumbrating stressed the role of causal powers, and Rom focused this by agreeing that people are centres of causal powers. This is a very powerful notion. Where we might disagree on this, and we do disagree on this, is that I say that people are not the only incumbents of causal powers in the world and that people's reasons are causes and norms, reasons, etc. and can all satisfy an adequate scientific criteria of causality. Social structures are like the natural environment, in so far as they can generate, that is constrain or enable, effects. The critique of the empiricist criteria for describing reality was a critique of the limited view that what was real was what we could see, touch, feel, taste or smell—I think I have gone through all the five senses. Where the new, what I call transcendental, realism went beyond that was saying we could ascribe reality to things like magnetic or gravitational field, even if we could not actually perceive them as long as we could identify their effects. So if we saw someone fall to the ground from the top of a building we quite naturally and properly ascribe this to the force of gravity. I want to argue that this notion of people as centres of causal powers is true, very true, but people are not the only centres of causal powers in the world and also I want to make reasons, norms and such causal properties in the fullest possible sense.

The second striking feature of this book was what Rom (his co-author was Paul Secord, so I should mention Paul as well) and Paul called the open souls doctrine. This is basically that people, and this was quite foreign to the sort of behaviourism of the time, have a pretty good idea of why they are doing what they are doing most of the time they are doing it. This is almost a definition of intentional action. This capacity that we have not just to act but to monitor what we are acting, to know the reasons for our acting, and to know why we are doing what we are doing, was a great and underutilised resource for social science. And for me this is in fact the beginning of social science. The first step in any adequate methodology is to identify what it is that the agents think they are doing. Here again, perhaps I will go further than Rom by arguing that we do not stop there, that is the starting point, we can reintroduce causal explanations grounded in natural environments, social structure, ideologies, such powerful particulars of the social world, to explain perhaps why it is they think what they think they are doing and perhaps even show that what they think they are doing is not actually the reason why they are doing it. In other words, what they think they are doing is wrong. Nevertheless, such a critique presupposes the move that Rom and Paul made. This move of course had been prefigured by the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Heidegger before that and is a familiar theme of critical theory and all theories which take a hermeneutical moment. But for me hermeneutics was contingently critical, it was a starting point, not the end result of social science, and so I characterised my position, critical naturalism, as being equivalent to a contingently critical hermeneutics.

A third aspect that I would like to praise Rom for (and I come to praise and not to bury Rom) came out in his next book relevant to the philosophy of the social sciences, *Social Being*, where he introduced the very powerful categorial couple between the practical and the expressive orders. This was a time when Marxism was pretty rampant and there were some rather reductionist forms of Marxism around at the time, not in keeping I might say with Marx's spirit or true intentions. Here the notion of the expressive order was very valuable, an important corrective to the crude materialism that was circulating at the time. His next book in

philosophy of social science, *Personal Being*, in 1983 was an absolutely brilliant tour de force and for me this is probably one of his finest books, and I think he is rewriting it now under a different title—the *Singular Self*. The thing that I want to stress here is that if there was a tendency in his works of the 60s and 70s to veer towards individualism, then this was corrected in *Personal Being*. He became or espoused Vygotskyism, the individual was constructed from social dyads, tryads, polyads, the individual was a construction from a wider society. This is really complementing at a different level of analysis Wittgenstein's private language argument and in a way I feel in that particular book Rom may have gone too far. Because the cover of *Personal Being* showed about six or seven absolutely identical faces, the assumption was really that society is so, as it were 'determining', that it was very difficult to have any singularity. Perhaps in his new book he is going to show us how it will be possible to be a social singular, but that was a problem for me in that book.

About this time he brought to the fore the notion of the conversation as being the primary social reality. This is taking us on to our main topic today. Rom has come out with a number of dualisms or dichotomies, the exact status of which I think we have to press him to clarify. In *Social Being* it was a practical and expressive order, it is not clear whether these were mutually exclusive or supposed to account for the whole of society, but anyway there was this striking dualism between the practical order and the expressive order. A little bit later he, and particularly in the excellent festschrift to Rom Harré which I happened to edit called *Harré and His Critics*,[1] he said basically as far as we know the only two social realities are individual physiology and the collective conversation. This was 1989. Let us think about this individual physiology and the collective conversation. Obviously one has got to ask whether that can possibly exhaust the social world but then what exactly are the mechanisms by which the collective conversation has real effects on the material world. For example, the conversational discursive act in virtue of which Clinton announced that he was resetting the Kyoto targets for reduction of

[1] Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.

greenhouse gases drastically by a horrendous figure, in fact for thirteen years. This is a discursive act which had an immediate real effect, ideologically, and presumably if it is carried out will have a real effect on the human environment. That is an effect of conversational or discursive acts on the environment. But it seems patently obvious to me that if I ask Alan, what is the time, *2.20*, this actually resulted in a material exchange between Alan and myself, in other words it had a material effect. If I shouted 'fire' in a sufficiently animated voice, you would all get up and leave. Of course you may get up and leave for other reasons as well. But anyway this is the sort of question that I would like to pose to Rom: what precisely are the links, accepting this duality between the collective conversation of which the individual is a special case, a special, socially constructed case (by this time Rom was calling himself a social constructionist), and the physiology or the physical order?

A little bit later we did a joint production with lots of other art people last autumn in something that has been published as a special issue of the *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, June–September 1997. On the ontological status of ideas, Rom said basically there were two realities. As I remember him saying at the time, there were molecules and there were people, and that was it. This is prima facie rather surprising in view of Rom's very complex ontology of the natural world. His very neat demonstration of the stratification of reality in nature. Why can we not have a stratified social world, why can there not be emergent powers? Even if people are in some sense primary, a point which might be disputed, there certainly can be emergent powers in the social world from people, and I will go on to be more specific about that. However, to bring the story up to date, at the moment Rom's basic duality in the published version of this special issue is basically between molecules and their structured interactions, and people and their skilled performances. In other words the emphasis has turned to the act or the event.

I think that there are four things wrong with this general approach. There is a dualism there and it is unmistakable. First of all I think it is unnecessarily restrictive, that is my first objection to it. And it is inconsistent with the general thrust of his critique

in philosophy of natural science of empiricism. I re-emphasise here particularly the fact that we both share a causal criterion of ascribing reality; and this opens the field to emergent properties of the social world, to consideration of the reality of all the modes of interaction between human beings, social products, nature etc. It seems to me to be inconsistent with Rom's project for the natural world. I can understand it being part of a critique of behaviourism in psychology or social psychology but I do not think he needs it. The second thing is that I think it is restrictive, that he actually omits certain elements of the social totality. For example, I have given one already, unless speech is real and causally efficacious, no science is possible. I will come to my own or critical realism's systematic reconstruction of the nature of social reality in a little bit but suffice it to say that it includes material transactions with nature, social structures, and the stratification of the personality plus their secondary and tertiary elaborations as well as personal inter-relations between people. And the personal inter-relations between people are not for a critical realist restricted to discursive or para-discursive acts. Thus, for example, the employment contract or the capital-labour relationship which is hardly glossed as a discursive act, although it entails and presupposes discursive acts. So what I am going to do as I list these four moments of what I think is wrong with his approach is relate them eventually to the categorial structure of dialectical critical realism. The first point is that it is unnecessary and inconsistent with realism. So the second critique, the second point is the omissive critique and this relates to the second moment of dialectical critical realism which hinges on concepts of negativity and absence.

The third thing wrong with it is that it is auto-subversive, it cannot be coherently sustained. Rom himself is making a massive causal intervention in the social world, he is materially affecting everyone's way of thinking, and unless his discursive acts had causal reality and were in some sense an emergent feature of that social world, it would be very difficult to make sense of his own project. In this way I think we have two results. We have a failure of totality, because all these dualisms result in a split between the social world, a split between the material or the causal ground

and then the rational or the intentional, ideational realm, we have a split which if you focus on one pole of a split results in the formation of an implicit totality We have quasi-causes or quasi-reasons where the other half of the totality is reflected or they are then combined and an implicit totality is formed and we have what in dialectic I call a TINA compromise form. So we have basically alienated implicit totality and I think that at the end of the day Rom is forced in virtue of his very acute realist perception of the social world to admit that under disguise, categories such as social structure and nature are sui generis part of the causal nexus of the social world. So in other words we have an implicit critical realism.

The fourth thing that happens corresponds to the fourth moment of dialectical critical realism. I think that at the end of the day Rom cannot sustain his own discursive practice because he, like I, was having an effect on Alan or you, hopefully having an effect on you: he has had an immense effect on other people so it fails to sustain the criterion of reflexivity. Close to these last two points a failure to sustain the criteria of totality, rational totality and reflexivity is I think a failure to sustain the tremendous moral impetus that is behind and sustains Rom's work. I feel that he is basically a humanist and he wants all the right things but without becoming a full-fledged critical realist he will not be able to get them. What I want to do to be slightly more systematic is to go through the nature, what I think Rom's position on what I will call the four moments of dialectical critical realism is and I will do that by defining the moment, then saying what Rom's position on that moment at a meta-theoretical or meta-physical level is; then I will go into the critical realist position very briefly and it's critique of Rom's substantive position.

I am not going to justify in detail here what I have tried to explain elsewhere, and that is I think that the system I developed as dialectical critical realism turns on four spheres of categories: the first turning on ontology and the critique of the reduction of being to our knowledge of being, that is the epistemic fallacy, the critique of actualism and so on, that is fairly well known. That I call the first moment. The second, the dialectical moment, turns on an attempt to revindicate negativity; notions of

transformation, change, space, time, tense and absence. The third turns on totality, interconnection, interactivity, and is becoming familiar to us in the ecological turn in recent social thought. The fourth turns on reflexivity which is the ultimate criterion in philosophy, that is the capacity of a system of thought to sustain its own intelligibility, its own mode of production, its own content and context.

Taking the first moment, the actual realist moment, here we come dead up against Rom's dualism. In his critique of my notion of social structure he says, 'as far as we can determine this is the exact and only basis for Bhaskar's conviction that realism is transcendental'. What is this? 'Bhaskar concludes that the power of causation transcends any moment of its occurrence or detection either in closed or in open systems'. I think that is pretty powerful really and if you have a realism which says that whether things are real is not determined by whether they are detected, detectable or any epistemological characteristic at all then that realism is the only sort of realism I would defend and I do not take that as being an objection. But of course we are concerned in science with knowable realities and I would hold that certainly social structures, the natural environment, our own past formation do constrain our social life. The social structure of money radically constrains where I can live, what I can do in my spare time, whether I can go on holiday or not; the social structure of money is absolutely ubiquitous, it is a living reality that we encounter in every transaction almost literally. Traditions, grammars which are allowed as social realities by Rom obviously determine the discursive possibilities of our speech acts. But so do lots of other things. So I really think that if we are going to allow grammars and language and people in the social world, accepting that people are causal agents with causal powers who have real effects then Rom has no reason not to accept social structures, the natural environment, material transactions with nature, things like the capital-labour relationship, global warming as all constituents and proper objects of social scientific investigation.

I say proper objects of social scientific investigation guardedly because Rom says in his latest piece that actually there is no difference between sociology and psychology and I think this is a

part of the problem about our positions. Because Rom came in through a very powerful critique of psychology, social psychology, whereas I came in through a critique, literally came back into philosophy, came into academic philosophy from being a student through a critique of standard economics and with an interest in social and political theory. But certainly I do not believe that we can reduce the social to the psychological or vice versa. I think that Rom's actual definition of what we would both call a form of dispositional realism which allows that what is real is real as a bundle of dispositions, independently of whether those dispositions are exercised and independently of whether, if they are exercised they are realised in any particular outcome and independently of whether, if they are realised and exercised in a particular outcome, they are perceived by human beings. This is in fact all you need to sustain all the entities in the social world that I want and Rom apparently does not.

The other interesting feature of realism which bears on his remarks to the effect that realism in the social world has got to be really quite limited, like a constraint imposed on our imagination by grammars, is his understanding of the implications of what I call categorial realism. This is saying something more than that social reality is conceptualised. For a start, in the natural world, for a consistent transcendental realism, and this is the only consistent form of realism there is, we have to say that the categories, whether we have got them right or not, exist independently of our philosophical investigations. We do not bring into being space, time and causality. Such features are, and we can get them right or wrong irrespective of our categorisation. Now the situation is slightly different in the social world, in that the social world is similarly categorised. But in virtue of the concept-dependent nature of social reality, it may be falsely categorised and this brings out the role of the notions of ideology and the critique of consciousness and the idea of the critique of the person's own accounts.

I have been pinning my critique of Rom on this dualism, questioning whether dualism is exhaustive of reality and how he can explain, or fail to explain, the links between the poles of the dualism. But critical realism is also very impressed with the

dualisms of orthodox social science. Let me list a few of the dualisms which it attempts to transcend. The dualism between naturalistic positivism and anti-naturalistic hermeneutics. This was the first dualism, the dualism which was transcended, I hope, in critical naturalism. Notice, however, that to transcend a dualism between two poles is not to give the two poles equal status, because it seems to me patently obvious in reading the works of hermeneuticists and critical theorists that the positivist pole is dominant because the hermeneuticists have not critiqued positivistic ontology, and this is generally true of post-structuralists and post-modernists. They critique the epistemology of positivism but not the ontology. Anyway, the first dualism was the asymmetrical dualism between positivism or naturalism as it was understood and hermeneutics, or anti-naturalism in a critical naturalist account.

Then there was the familiar dualism between structure and agency. This is a very well worn but interesting dualism. Of course what we are (or at least I am) against is reification and voluntarism. The interesting thing is this, if you elaborate an account, as I attempted in my transformational model of social activity, to show how the social world was reproduced or transformed by our agency, but not created by it, this does not mean to say that the two poles are, as it were, on the same level again. Because if the social world is constituted by reified agencies, money, capital, perhaps the nation state, perhaps the nuclear family, all of which are reified entities, then they have to enter into the description of the social world. There is a certain sense in which by accepting categorial realism we are accepting that master–slave relationships, instrumental reasoning, alienation, reification, intellectual sins are out there in the world as real practical sins and it is our job as social scientists to help the transformation of social reality itself, so that we will have a social reality which is free of the category mistakes which are intrinsic to oppressive societies such as we have known for most of our history. That is just a brief aside on reification and voluntarism. I might say on reification acid voluntarism that I think it is obvious that Rom is more voluntaristic than me. I think that what Rom thinks is that when we go to

sleep the social structure shuts down and when we wake up in the morning, whatever it is that is the social structure is reconstituted. I think that is also pretty close to what Tony Giddens believes, and I think that is false.

Then there is a dichotomy which critical naturalism tries to transcend between individualism and collectivism. Both are pretty abysmal. Take the collective, the idea of the nation on the march as a unit of social analysis. It seems utterly repulsive, and then the notion of the nuclear, homuncular individual. This is equally repulsive. What is the self after all? What sort of self is this? Both must be thoroughly rejected. I argue for a relational conception of the subject matter of the social sciences, in terms of which we understand this as being constituted by the enduring but transformable relations between people and the roles that they occupied.

Another dualism that I attempted to transcend was the mind–body dualism. I argued for an emergent powers materialism, that is situating them in the same totality, putting them in the same grammar. Mind is an emergent power of matter, it reacts on matter and matter effects, conditions mind. Mind itself can be regarded as ingredient in matter, as an emergent possibility of matter. Really this is a dichotomy which should be thrown out of the window. Similarly reasons and causes. Once we accept that causality is a very generic category, which has nothing mechanical at all about it, which applies to magnetic and gravitational fields, there is no reason not to allow that reasons may be causes, and in fact there is good reason to argue that we can only sustain a coherent sociology or a coherent ethics if we can make the distinction between an agent's real reason for acting and his imagined, supposed, conjectured or rationalised reason for acting. The final dichotomy that critical naturalism attempts to transcend is the fact-value dichotomy, and I argue that we can move from facts to values by a route which is well known to you.

What critical naturalism tries to do is to show how social science becomes possible in virtue of the nature of the social reality. What we have tried to do is define the characteristics of the social world that might make it knowable to us and they are the activity, concepts, space, time, social relational, dependence of the social world, together with the critical limit that I have

referred to earlier. I think that the form of argument in the social sciences is exactly the same as the form of argument in the natural sciences. It is retroductive in virtue of the concept-dependent nature of social reality. It has a hermerneutical moment which may make it transcendental and in virtue of the fact that our belief systems may be categorially false it may be dialectical. But dialectical and transcendental arguments are proper sub-sets of retroductive arguments and that is the method common to science. And I think that method is one of which dialectic forms the most general learning process.

Just to consider a very vexed topic, turning to the second moment of critical realism, the chief moment of the second edge of critical realism turns on the concept of absence. Rom argues that absence is basically unnecessary and that everything we can say about absence we can say by using the concept of the possible. We are both modal realists in the sense that we both believe that the possible is ontologically, logically, epistemologically prior to the actual. There is no difference between us. But I dispute that absence is the same as the possible. My concept of absence is of determinate absence as well as nothingness and this is a very rare concept. Almost always when philosophers from Parmenides on have discussed negativity, they have discussed nothingness, which is, as Rom says, an infinite category, a pretty useless one. Thus the only negative notion Hegel discusses as such is nothingness and, coming after being he proceeds immediately into their synthesis in becoming. Thus negativity is effectively eliminated from Hegel's dialectic by that move.

My paradigm of absence is a very simple one, it is determinate absence. It is patently obvious that we are sitting in a room in which rain is absent, this is an important fact about it. Fire is absent as well. Time is also running out for me, it is becoming absent, which is very pertinent. That is the first thing; I am concerned with determinate absence which is exactly on a par with determinate presence, except I would argue that it is ontologically prior. Secondly, absence is not the same concept as the possible because we can of course have absent possibilities, and possible absences, recursively embedded in one another. The concepts are completely different. Although the concept of the absent includes

the non-actual possible, the concept of absence is far broader than that of the non-actual (although we both agree on the sense that the non-actual is absent); here is the residue of a prejudice, which I have called the doctrine of ontological monovalente, which leads to the emasculation of the negative, taken from Parmenides and Kant and further endorsed, if not enshrined, by Hegel. I cannot conceive of a coherent discursive act which is not constituted by spaces, absences in some way. The importance for the ontology of social life is precisely this, that the paradigm of social activity, on a transformational model of social activity, depends on *absenting*. *Agency just is absenting*. It is transformation, it is negating what is given and what moves to the fore in critical realism is the notion of activity as work. This is a very Aristotelian concept and there is some irony in the fact that Rom called his last meta-theoretical statement on it 'Aristotelian'. I could also argue here about the presence of the past, about emergence, about tense and lots of other things. But I have more than stretched the tolerance of the chair. I am sure we can come to these topics later. I would just like you all to remember all the nice things I said about Rom in the beginning.

ROM

Well if you have a star pupil what can you expect! I have got a lot of small things to say which may add up to something altogether. I begin by reminding Roy of the cover of my *Personal Being* book. It is the famous painting of the Chumley twins in the Tate. If you look at it from a distance you might think they are identical, if you go up close you will find every single detail is different. They have obviously been dressed by their mum or their nurse or whatever to be distinct. That was the point of the book. Stand back a bit from human beings and you might think they are all the same, get up close and you will see there are a huge variety of minute differences and these differences make all the difference. Roy pointed out that I have lately made a lot of use of the notions of Vygotsky and I would just like to remind you briefly about the general conceptual structure of a Vygotskyan point of view which I think is not only applicable to child development but to all sorts

of matters in which people are with one another for one reason or another. I could draw a nice Cartesian pair of axes between the public and the private on the one hand and the collective and the individual on the other. So we have an axis from public to private and we have an axis from collective to individual and the Vygotskyan idea is that a human being is born somewhere into the public collective quadrant and has properties which draw on and bring out the activities of the people interacting in that quadrant, primarily conversationally, which gradually becomes privatised by the individual, which Vygotsky calls appropriation, and then eventually become individualised. So there is a subjective realm of course, and there is a non-subjective realm, I would not like to call it objective, but what is in here? Well, in my view it is the public conversation, and it is that conversation which transforms nascent human beings into people. That idea I think is something we have to bear in mind in the whole of our social investigations, that people are never free of a societal matrix which is transforming them in one way or another. And it is doing it by the sort of process that Vygotsky talked about—in this basic schema there is a constant circulation between what is going on in the conversation which becomes privatised and individualised and eventually may return to the public world via the other two quadrants. We produce in the public world individual acts which may succeed, a joke people may laugh at, innovation may be accepted or they may simply be ignored, entered into if accepted, taken up into the conversation.

Now to the question of causality and I want to sketch out in a bit more detail what it is I think are the basic set of notions that we need to understand what people are getting at, what physicists are getting at when we talk about them informally, we talk about things being brought about, being made and so on. The idea that Madden and I had started to develop, ail idea which was taken from the physicists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries incidentally, was the idea that causality must be thought of always in terms of entities and not in terms of events. So that part of what led Hume astray was to think that the ontology of the world was an ontology of events. In fact if you read the first chapter of both of Hume's books that is the very first move, it is

a world of events. It is either impressions or ideas depending on how far inside the individual person we are going. He is sceptical about powers, about substances, he is not interested in entities. Now we argued that if you look closely at the physical sciences you will see that, whenever notions like causality are employed, formally or informally, it is entities that are in question. What is the powerful particular that is doing something or other in these circumstances. This is a very tricky notion because I did notice that Roy, uncharacteristically, slipped in that he thought that the gravitational field was what was pulling the object towards the centre of the earth. Not in physics it isn't, it is the earth that is pulling. The earth creates around it a gravitational field which we can describe in terms of dispositions. That is, if released at such and such a point an object will fall with such and such acceleration and the generic notion in physics is that of a charge, a charge and its field. The field and the dispositions, the charge is the power, it goes for magnetic poles, it goes for electrons, it goes for the whole story. So we talk about gravitational charge and that is essentially a massy body with a certain mass which is its gravitational charge. So we think of charges and their fields, active entities and their dispositions, which are distributed in space.

Now the move we want to take in the social world is very closely parallel. If we ask what are the entities that are involved, the entities are people. They correspond to charge, they are the powerful particulars, and of course they have all sorts of skills and dispositions which in the human case are distributed over time. It is a kind of temporal field where the skills and dispositions of people are deployed. The physical world, the interactions between the powerful particulars via the fields creates a world and I argue that the interactions between people via their skills and dispositions creates a social world. Now what are the primary skills and dispositions to do? Well there is a vast, huge variety of such things. But the ones that I think we should focus on which are so characteristic of the human social world are those which have to do with discursive acts. I am not saying for one minute that discursive acts are exhaustive of the secondary productions of the social world, they are properties of human interactions, yes, but not the only properties, there are all sorts of

other properties. But discursive acts are incredibly important. I want to remind Roy of something about money. I do not know whether you have seen any money recently but here is a bit of it, and look it is all written all over, and it is just a chunk of paper with writing on it. Incidentally it is written by the right person, yes, my goodness, it is a chap called Kantfield who is the chief cashier, and you have to look and see if his name is on the stub because if anybody offers you something written by Bhaskar, I would not take it. What is Roy's problem? It is another piece of writing because the right things are not written in his bank account, so when he takes another interesting discursive entity like this and pushes it through a machine, this is a piece of writing too, and it comes to his bank account and the right number of 0's written on it are missing, then he cannot buy the latest hifi or computer that he wishes to. So bear in mind Roy that money is of all things the most discursive object of all. It says, I promise to pay on demand, it used to say a pounds worth of silver, but I do not know what they promise to pay now, Euros I guess, but we will see.

This is a terribly important idea, the distinction between the powerful entities and the dispositions that they have which determines the field of possibility. And then the actions or activities or performances brought about by those things. Like filling bodies, like speech acts and so on. So the general idea then is a very close parallel between physics and the social sciences. When you come to look a little bit more closely though, it is the hierarchical structure that has a quite different interpretation in my view. Both Roy and I acknowledge that the physical world and the social world have a hierarchical structure, that is for sure. The question is what is its ontology, what does it consist of. Well the physical world consists of structures of entities and we track down causality through those. So I offer you a molecule and it has got certain causal powers. So are these its causal powers? Well no, not really, because it is a combination of various atoms which have certain charges. Are those its causal powers? No, we have to go into sub-atomic particles and perhaps even to quarks and perhaps more things which are yet to emerge from obscurity. So in the physical world we are tracking a hierarchical structure of

entities. At each level there will be certain sorts of dispositions of those entities which interact to produce the world, analysed at that level.

Now when we come to look at the hierarchical structure of the social world, the question we want to ask ourselves is what are the entities. And in my view the entities are, there is only one level of entities, namely people. Why is there, a hierarchy? Because there are hierarchical structures of acts. If you want to understand the hierarchical structure of the social world you have to see it as a hierarchy of acts. The acts produced by individual people are used to perform higher order acts, which themselves coalesce in yet higher order acts and the hierarchy is a structure of acts. This is one of the things that Seccord and I argued for long ago, and the more work that has been done along these lines the more satisfactory this point seems to be. Let us take a very simple example. That in the course of a recent notorious trial in Boston all sorts of acts were performed by individual people, which so to say added up to higher order acts, and now there is a further range of acts at that level being contemplated which will themselves add up to yet higher order acts and so on. So in our view the hierarchy of the social world is as real as you like but it is a hierarchy of acts rather than a hierarchy of entities. Other social entities are properties of the discourse, the discursive productions of people working together to do things. That means that when we are looking for agency we have to make a sharp distinction, and we need to do this about our ontology, between agency and activity. We can see that all sorts of things seem to have some kind of activity about them, to bring things about, the question for the ontologist is, what is the agent in for, what is the original, as they used to say in the seventeenth century, of that activity. In the physical sciences we know where it is, it is in the charges not in the fields, in the social world by parity of reasoning, I want to say it is in the people not in their acts. Of course acts are active, they bring things about, but only because they are the acts of the agents in the situation, the people. Then you put a bit more spin on that.

Roy is inclined to say that reasons are causes. Well, I do not think we should use causal language at all. I think it is highly misleading. Let us talk about agents and work with that notion. What

are reasons. Well, if you ask yourself what is the offering of a reason doing in social activity, what is doing some work or other, on who's behalf is it doing the work, on behalf of the person who is using it. Just as you might come across someone who is hammering. Thus there is a cylindrical piece of iron with a point on the end and they are going like this; you say what is going on here? And you say well this hammer is pushing in this nail, but wait a minute, it would not do this if this person was not doing it, what is he hammering for? Well, it is some project that somebody has in mind. They are hammering the thing in to stop the ladder slipping. So we have to ask ourselves for everything that anybody does, what is the project in which they are involved. The moment you ask that question you begin to find room for another metaphor. That is the tool–task metaphor. And I think that all these things that Roy mentions, natural objects, reasons, bits of paper etc., these could all be thought of as tools for the accomplishment of certain tasks. And that leads us to the idea of instructions.

One of the ways in which we make use of the natural world, the physical world, is via instructions. We tell someone to do something and they, understanding our instructions or the discursive act, move something about. Mr Clinton says cut the emissions. It is the United States of America, so immediately the senate and the supreme court stop his instruction from having any efficacy. So we know very well that emissions will not be cut. But that is not because he did not issue the instruction. It is because various other contrary discursive acts were put in which frustrated it. I tell you to do something, you say go jump in the lake. I have still given you the instruction even though of course I have not thought about what I wanted you to do, except maybe I wanted after all to be encouraged to swim. Wittgenstein made that point. One of the best ways to get someone to jump is to say, look, look there is someone who needs rescuing and they all jump in. The task–tool metaphor is I think of the very greatest importance in tying people to the world. The world both of material things and of the discursive acts that people had before. Just think about that a little bit. An exercise you could contemplate. You might wander around Westminster and imagine that some strange thing has happened, that some gust has emerged that has obliterated the

writing on all the documents, there are no documents in the world, just blank sheets of vellum. All the writing has gone. No road signs anymore, no 70 mph signs or anything like that. We would find it very very hard to imagine sustaining our world. Roy says lend me 10 quid and I pull out a blank sheet of paper. Imagine all that has happened, Roy's bank account is just blank. He puts his credit card in and up on the screen comes nothing. Imagine that the tower of Babel has indeed happened and we do not understand one another. Have you ever tried to order a cup of tea in Budapest? You will have the same sort of experience, or Estonia where they speak Finnish, a language only they can understand. It is a very strange experience when nothing you say makes any difference and nothing that is said to you strikes any chord. Well, in the view of people like myself the social world has evaporated. There is no such world because there is no possibility of a performance of acts which can add up to hierarchical higher order acts. The whole thing has disappeared. Goodness knows what sort of world we would be in, because chimpanzees do not live in that kind of world, chimpanzees live in an already quite conventionalised world. So when you carry out that sort of thought experiment you can begin to get some sense of just how crucial the discursive activity is.

Now Garfinkel has got a nice little ironic phrase for words like class, nation, etc. He calls it glorious words, and of course this is meant to be ironical. Huge words, I would like to call them, vast words which pick up some hierarchical structure of discursive acts and give them a name and so make us think of them as entities: Now I think Roy really believes that only entities can be causally efficacious, but he is far too promiscuous about what he thinks are entities. This is what I was arguing, that Roy is too ready to accept things that we would be sceptical about as having the characteristic of entities and thus being able to be powerful particulars. Social structure, yes of course there is social structure, but it is a property of a series of human acts. It is not an entity If we are true to the causal theory that Roy and I both want to agree on, then social structure could not possibly have a standing as a source of activity, it is not an entity at all, let alone an efficacious entity. So of course we can still talk about, use these

glorious huge words, but let us ask ourselves very carefully With a great deal of scepticism, let us ask ourselves just exactly what it is that would be claimed if someone was saying this is an entity. It is quite a different matter to see it as a property. And properties of course had to be properties of entities. Properties of what? So ask the 'what question' in a fairly sceptical tone of voice.

There are quite a number of other things that I want to pick up. First of all, the question of immanence and transcendence, that is again a point, a bone of contention between Roy and myself. I think that the transcendence, immanence notion can be made sense of in a very modest kind of way, on a very small scale. And one of the things that Seccord and I were trying to do in our book was to make a distinction between transcendence and immanence with respect to the social psychology of everyday life. And in particular with respect to the notion of a rule. It seemed a good idea, and I am still to some extent attracted by it to think of the orderliness of life, its normativity as something having to do with rules. Now we had to be extremely careful and we were, I regret to say, rather sloppy even though our hearts were in the right place with that notion. Let me just spell it out a little bit more carefully. There is a sharp distinction between the role of the notion of a rule when we are talking about something transcendent to the action. So for example, when someone is taking part in an unfamiliar ceremony and they have a rule book, they consult the rule and use it and do what the rule says. Or ultimately what the writer of the rule says, not the rule that is doing it per se, but what the writer of the rule says. And then compare that sort of case with something where we all know very well how to do what it is we are doing and someone tries to write a rifle book for it. For example, speaking your native tongue or riding a bicycle and things of that sort. But how do we write the rule book. Well, that is definitely not transcendent to the action. So how does it come about that someone can speak their mother tongue in a normative and orderly fashion, not because they are following a rule. Now Wittgenstein distinguishes between acting in accor-dance with a rule, where the rules are immanent in practice and have to be extracted by a social psychologist or grammarian or someone, and then written out, and where we treat the

rules as a set of instructions, as transcendent to the practice. I am quite happy with the notion of transcendence and immanence at that level, but if we go any further to look for something transcendent to the action, I am sceptical of making sense of that notion. We might have a large-scale sociological treatise, as in Karl Marx or Tony Giddens, that might serve in some way as a representation of society transcendent to the action. It might or it might not. And we know the catastrophic effect of treating *Das Kapital* as a set of instructions for setting up a new society. Not a very good idea, however brilliant it might be as an analysis of mid-Victorian ways of doing things. So the transcendent immanent distinction is very important. I believe that most of the glorious things, in Garfinkel's words, are transmitted immanently but not transcendentally. There is nothing in that sense transcendent to the action except of course the action itself. And we should not mistake higher order acts for something transcendent to the action. So when a little person is born into a human conversation, the individual is transcended momentarily by the conversation of its elders, and then it very quickly comes to partake in that conversation.

The next thing I want to say is a little bit about the complications that arise if we take this view. And we are trying to make sense of the idea that there are only molecules and persons as entities in the world. There is a lot of complicated stuff about that which I shall not go into. But if we try to do that then we are inclined to say well, causality in the physical sense applies to collections of molecules, and if we take the task–tool metaphor we might say that the human body and its brain has a collection of molecules functioning as a tool. And we might be interested in its mechanism. How exactly does the brain work, well that will tell you something about how I might use it to remember something or to perform a calculation or something of that sort. But I could equally take out my diary or calculator and do it vicariously or somewhere else. It looks as if we would neatly partition then the account of things in the material world using notions like causal mechanism based upon the idea of atoms or quarks as powerful particulars and we are looking at a different kind of account of orderliness in the social world, but in terms of immanent and

transcendent rules, and by and large as I was arguing, the vast majority of these rules are immanent. That leads to a kind of problem for understanding what social psychologists are doing. And how they could have fallen into the extraordinary idea that you could do experiments in social psychology. How did it even seem possible that you could trigger a causal mechanism to bring about social actions?

I think the reason for it is because there is a third category of human action which is tremendously important in everyday life—namely, the category of habit. We have on the one hand intentional actions in which we can talk about projects and plans and so on. On the other hand we have the operation of body as a mechanism, a tool and then there is a habit. A huge amount of our life runs by, on habit. Habits look very much like mechanisms. I think that part of the reason for the old style social psychology was the confusion of habitual action which looks automatic, simulates automatic action with causal action, strictly where there is a strictly identifiable causal mechanism. From what I have just been saying, the resistance to that assimilation, returning one to the discursive point of view, is that what looks like habitual actions are to be assimilated to just the character of normative activity; only the rules are immanent. That is, we are not in any sense at all doing rule following. My old friend John Searle recently came up with a wonderful diatribe against people who think there are unconscious rules which people are unconsciously following. Immanent rules are simply a metaphor for all sorts of ways of people doing things and then the psychologist or sociologist comes in later and writes down the norms as rules. There are no unconscious rules, habits are just habits.

I want to finish up with a little bit about a new idea that I and some of my friends have been working on recently. We started with a study on peace in Iran. We started with a study of the Ayatollah and the problem we were concerned about was a problem that goes deep into sociology and very much into the territory that Roy has made his own, namely the territory of transformation. It is a very striking thing, is it not, that after the end of the French monarchy in the French revolution, two turns of the wheel, or really one and a half, and we have Napoleon crowning

himself emperor. That is the difference between Napoleon and Louis XIV, not much. We have Jo Stalin setting up what amounted to a Tsarist regime, the Odpoo becomes the KGB, what is the difference, not much. The Ayatollahs have set themselves up with their regime, weirdly like the regime of the Shah, corruption is perhaps even more flagrant in Iran now than it was in the Shah's day. How has that come about? Is it not weird that despite the fact that large-scale changes are made in the macrostructure of society, all sorts of different ways of organising matters on a large scale, how does it come about that, after a couple of turns of the wheel it looks as though nothing has happened at all? What is the bearer of that particular kind of conservatism. I started this years ago on my own with some researchers to understand how it comes about that the world of the heterodox generation after generation in a particular community, let us say southern England, keeps on being just the same. How does that come about? I thought and I still think it probably right to some extent that the world, the autonomous childhood world in which all sorts of social practices are passed down from children to children, continues on, there is even evidence that some of it is the same as it was in Norman French days because they still use Norman French terminology. A kind of groundswell of practices which maintains all sorts of crucial things about the larger social world. Well these are simply matters like how you greet each other. Or how do people sit at a table. These are the unnoticed bearers of the structure. Because they are what determines the way the discursive world operates. So in our view it is even more microscopic than we thought before. It is these tiny things that carry what Garfinkel calls the glory responses. So this is the way you greet people, this is the way you organise your family life, this is the way you walk down the street, then that sort of thing will carry through in subtle ways to influence the whole of the discourse. And if we are right the social world is a discursive creation. It is going to influence the whole of the discursive world and hence all of that hierarchical structure of acts that, unless we are very careful, we may be tempted to reify into what I take to be a serious violation of Okham's razor, a reification beyond the realm of duality, namely making these things which are really hierarchical acts generated in the discourse, making

them into things which seem to have causal efficacy. As far as I believe only people are the sources of activity in the world and there is nothing else.

ROY

I think that the ground is becoming clearer, the ground for the differences is becoming clearer between Rom and myself. There are basically two sorts of reductions which I think Rom may be guilty of. That is the reduction of the social ontology to people on the one hand and the reduction of social ontology to conversations on the other. I am not quite sure, but these certainly are not the same. Let me just assert something. Firstly, there is no reason to suppose that activities cannot have a structure. Certainly people are born into a world which is pre-structured for them by language, economic traditions and so forth. I think Rom may agree with all this, allowing that people or conversations or both are the bearers of structures. Now we are getting closer because he is not actually denying that social structures exist, he is saying that people or conversations are the bearers of social structure. Now I want to say an agent's activity is a necessary condition for the reproduction of a social structure. But it is not the same thing as it. There is something more to the social structure than that necessary condition. That is in relation to the people dichotomy. In other words, an agent's activity is necessary but not sufficient for claims about social structure. Secondly, I want to say that social reality is concept-dependent but it is not exhausted by concepts. Again, concepts are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the existence of social structure and other social items. I will not complicate matters by asking how exactly nature fits into this because I think these are very clear questions which we can put to Rom now, if he is prepared to accept this formulation that structures exist and are born in virtue of things like activities which may be possible or actual. Then we could finesse the whole issue by saying that they are people-dependent, but not people-exhaustive.

Money has lots of functions. The promissory note idea is a very weak function of money. It is noticeable how quickly Rom

put the ten pound note back into his wallet, suggesting that it has other functions than being a nice piece of writing promised by his bank manager, by the manager of the bank of England or what used to be the bank of England. But I think we are coming very close to it. Accordingly, to critical realism social activity is yes, people-dependent. Social structures are people-dependent but they are not exhausted by people. In exactly the same way, social structures are concept-dependent but they are not exhausted by their conceptuality. Now are we in agreement Rom?

ROM

I think there is still something absolutely fundamental, lots of things that need straightening out. First of all I do not think, and I do not think I have ever said that any agent could bring anything much about. John Shotter and I have been arguing for two decades that the only possible way an agent can enter into his or her agency is in joint action. There is no such thing as individual action. Even people soliloquising or even people daydreaming, in so to say within a conversational framework, even if the interlocutor is notional. I simply do not believe in the possibility of that individual agent creating a social act. It has got to be groups of agents in one way or another. That is one point. Secondly, I do not think for a minute that concepts are the substance of sociology. It seems to me that it is activities and in so far as activities are given meaning by the people who are performing them, either directly or vicariously or by virtue of the positioning of the problem by somebody else, then of course they do display for those who want to see it that way, concepts. So for example someone who says something disagreeable to someone, it displays a concept, namely something like rudeness or something of that sort. But that is work done by them discursively via the commentators upon the action. So I certainly do not want to go for the idea of an individual as capable of performing social acts all on his or her own. Now the key difference between Roy and I has to do with this notion of structure. That is where it is at I think.

Because I think that Roy still thinks, despite the eloquence of my last half hours' dissertation, that structures are somehow or other there as well as people and that they have an interpretative status. I said who am I to deny the existence of social structures, but as what? Property or entity. And that is where it is all at. So my argument against Roy's version of critical realism was that he assimilated structures to entities and that causal power theory was based upon the idea that causal efficacy is reserved to entities. Now entities can do things, can bring things about and what they bring about jointly are discursive structures of various sorts. Of course they are structured, where are these grammars, not up there, not language, not Saussure's *langue* but *parole*, and grammars are only there in the discourse. They do not exist outside it. They are a term of art used by grammarians to describe what they write down in their books, something that we might employ when we are trying to learn a foreign language. So I really am at odds with Roy over structure. As far as I am concerned structure is a property of properties, it is a second order property not an entity. I have got the same war going in psychology, but because psychologists are just as promiscuous, you find them talking about beliefs. Beliefs, what on earth are they? Maybe they talk about memories, but hang on a minute, what is a memory, what is it as an entity. I can understand remembering, I can understand people talking about the past, but what would a memory be, what would an opinion be. I can hear people telling you what they think, but what would an opinion be. And worse, when you get that travesty of folk psychology by the Churchlands into people's heads they put beliefs and desires as if these were entities floating around. They even sometimes call them mental states or mental entities. Beware, there ain't no such thing. There are people thinking, talking, jumping up and down, and what they do have certain attributes, properties of properties, properties of performances. So it is the same war everywhere. It is this war against reification. I thought my pal here was one of my allies in the war against reification and if you are then what are these structures doing here?

ROY

What I would like to say to Rom is that his dichotomy between a thing and an event seems to me to be far too crude, even in the natural world. We have to redefine our notion of an event in contemporary physics and Rom is very aware of this. An event is not a single instance, it can be a distribution of space or time, it can be highly enduring. What exactly is a thing? It is not at all clear. A system of relationships? There seems to me nothing wrong in calling an economic system like capitalism or like the banking system or like the system that the IMF presides over now as being an entity. It certainly has all the properties of being a bearer of causal powers which constrain and enable us. If that crash that started off in East Asia had gone on we would all have felt the pinch. Luckily for us it did not go on. But if the banking system in this country were to collapse, this would have momentous causal implications for all of us and it seems to me patently obvious that language, economic systems, social systems, the structures of cities enable and constrain. Moreover, let us think of structures as being systems of relationships. Let us move away from this crude thing-event ontology. Let us think of relationships. Let us think of different paradigms of things. Consider what language enables and constrains. What was the feminist critique of language? It was that it constrained certain possibilities of women, that language which was called sexist actually had a determining influence on the options available to them. In the same way the possession or non-possession of a ten pound note makes all the difference in the world if you want to get a taxi cab home or you want to buy a nice book (like one of Rom's or mine) in the shop.

ROM

Language does not constrain women, linguistic practices constrain women; that is what constrains people, it is practices. Now what are practices, they are activities. We have to be very careful at drawing on the analogy with the physical sciences, because if you do take that analogy seriously, the crucial thing about

causally efficacious entities in the physical sciences is that they have criteria of identity. They are enduring, and that is a very important characteristic; the only thing in the physical world that has that characteristic is not practices but people, because people perform practices.

ROY

We have got it in a nutshell now, because at any moment of time the possibilities open to people are constrained by something which I am calling structure. Now that structure is reproduced or transformed by peoples' practices, that structure does not exist independently of the prior practices of people at an earlier moment of time.

ROM

Why do you need to put in that term?

ROY

Because we are constrained by the presence of the past.

ROM

How, exactly how?

ROY

I believe that we are living in an abundant world. It may be a very romantic notion but I believe that scarcity could be eliminated over night. And I believe that the nature of human needs is finite and that we need have no economic crisis and that we could have a rational social order. Now the constraints on our doing that lie in the nature of the global system in which we live, which we reproduce or transform, and which we must transform—that is change, now.

ROM

No, Roy, it is the nature of the global discourse in which we partake.

ROY

And the one is very closely related to the other.

ROM

There is not any other.

ROY

This is very interesting you see because in a way there is another way in which Rom and I are moving closer now because I have been stressing categorial realism and I have been stressing that money is not just a thing, a concept, it is actually a category which is constitutive of the nature of social reality itself. Rom is saying a global capitalist economy is a matter of discourse. I am saying it is certainly a category. So we are not so far apart. But it is also a reality. It has all the causal powers of any other category. When we look at society in this way we can see that both crude materialism and crude idealism are completely unacceptable. Because categories are constitutive of reality, they are also the sort of things that philosophers and political theorists and economic theorists talk about, but they are the bearers of causal powers and I think it is totally absurd to say that there are not causal constraints on the future of Bangladesh.

Chapter Five

Critical Realism and Ethics: Introducing Transcendental Dialectical Critical Realism*

Realism about transcendence

I would like to relate three of Doug's points in particular to what I am going to say, which isn't a sort of resumé of *From East to West*, but rather an introductory background to it. The three points I would particularly like to take up are first, the question of realism about religious experience, which I would broach under the broader category of realism about *transcendence*. Secondly, I think talk about god is eased in a dialectical critical realist context by being seen as talk about an—or the—*ultimatum*. Thirdly, I want to focus on that dialectic of *co-presence* which

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* *Alethia*, April 2000.

After Doug Porpora's *presentation a question was raised, in effect, whether religious sociology, as distinct from the sociology of religion, has a proper place within critical realist discourse. The corrigibility of experience is a central realist tenet, and indispensable to explanatory critique of, say, fascist experience. How can religious experience be corrigible given that there can be no agreement within the scientific community concerning its object (or whether, indeed, it has a real object)? After some discussion,* Margaret Archer *(in the Chair), suggested that Roy should be allowed to provide the 'hinge' on this issue, because the discussion was cutting off epistemology from ontology, which is not what Doug does in his book, and what Roy wanted to do was swing the focus away from the experiential to the ontological groundings Doug invokes.*

is the dialectic of autonomous and heteronomous—or real and irreal—determinations. I will argue that transcendence as such is a phenomenon which has been much misunderstood and is essential to science, and in particular scientific discovery.

So I am not going to argue about specifically theological or religious transcendence as such, but I would like to say a few words about the dispute into which Doug got embroiled. There are two interesting takes I would like to suggest on the démarche Doug seemed to get landed in. The first is that, within the continuum of being, is there really such a huge difference between realism about god and realism about any other being—for instance a galaxy which is beyond the expanse of our current most powerful telescopes? Secondly, suppose that god is in fact the self—that god is the missing self or at least is to be included in it, i.e. that god is part of the missing self—then there might be an interesting new angle on Doug's question.

However, what I primarily want to defend in this talk is realism about transcendence. One form of transcendence is the sort of transcendence typically found—or claimed to be found—in acts of religious worship: meditation, prayer, communion or whatever. So that is one of the things I would like to pick up from Doug's talk. The second thing is really, more specifically, his realism about god and I would like to subsume this under the question of realism about ultimata. In *Dialectic* and other works I distinguished various levels of being, and it is clear from what Doug is saying (and I am bouncing my ideas off Doug's now to make for dialectical continuity) that for him and for many Americans god is an ultimatum. So I am going to be talking about realism about transcendence and realism about ultimata. Ultimata have particular qualities and one of their qualities that is relevant to our discussion is that they are in some way *ingredient* in lower orders of being, so that if god did exist and if god was an ultimatum one would expect god, as a basic property of the universe, a basic constituent or categorial structure, to be for instance in this room—and indeed in some sense in each part or aspect of it (without however saturating the room, so that we should still have to say that there were other things besides god present in the room).

Irrealist surface, realist deep structure

A third interesting idea relating to Doug's book is the peculiar paradox we find in American society between the ontological necessity for Americans to be selves and their absence of a sense of self. For what we have here is the co-existence of a presence, namely reasons, or their belief that there are reasons for everything they do, and an absence, namely their being unable to cite or justify the belief that there are reasons (or that these—such-and-such—are the reasons). It is the same or a parallel contrast between the existence of the self and a lack of a sense of that existence of the self. This is a perfect example of the dialectics of co-presence, and this takes me to the theme of my talk. There is what strikes me as being a huge paradox about realism. Most philosophy and most societies are profoundly irrealist in character. Now I claim realism to be true, and we critical realists believe realism to be true; so we have a juxtaposition between an irrealist categorial structure (and I mean this as part of what I call the platinum plate in Hegelian dialectic, viz. the way in which one can use a philosophy as a diagnostic clue to the character of our society—and I think it is true to say that our societies are in character profoundly irrealist) and our belief that realism is fundamentally true.

Now this pattern or figure of an irrealist surface and a realist deep structure is paralleled by similar motifs which vibrate, recur and resonate throughout western and indeed eastern thought. For example there is the assumption that Marx and Rousseau had that man is essentially free—that at a deep level, he/she/we are *even now* essentially free—but everywhere in chains. Then that essential freedom which we possess is occluded and overlain by structures of what Marx called ideology and what the Vedic tradition in India regards as *maya* or illusion. So the structure of these two forms of thought in respect of freedom and in respect of realism are very similar. We have the idea of an irrealist categorial structure masking and overlaying and acting as a surface filter to a profound deeper realist structure which is waiting (and wanting) to be free of this irrealist superstructure. And the idea of autonomous human beings in some basic sense aspiring

to be free, that is to be shed of, or rather to shed themselves of the heteronomous structures that impede and prevent the liberation of humanity. This seems to be a fundamental theme, which I touched on in my talk in Örebro, *the* fundamental theme and presupposition of western radical thought—it is amazing how prevalent it is in radical critical and libertarian thought and philosophical writing.

Now besides these paradoxes of irrealism and freedom there are other similar paradoxes. We could say that the universe is necessarily one and whole and seems to be bound together by holistic forces. In the ethical domain one would look to instances of love as a great binding force. And yet the world as we know it is also overlain and occluded by structures which are highly divisive, alienating, split. In the ethical domain the overriding emotion remains one of fear. Our world is dominated by fear, not love. Then again, this is a world, one could claim—I would certainly claim—of enormous abundance, yet it is also a world of extraordinary poverty. This is a world without (non-dialectical) rationale. For we can have good reason to believe that we can cut oppression and suffering to a minimum; yet it is at the same time a world characterised by massive oppression and suffering.

Dialectic of co-presence

So what seems to be happening is that we have a view of human beings as essentially free—the structure of the world as essentially realist and essentially harmonious, or one in which something like cosmic love could manifest itself—being *occluded* and *overlain* by heteronomous or irrealist categorial structures or determinations. In arguing for categorial realism I have argued that categories are real so there is nothing wrong in talking about categorial structures as features of the universe: they are in fact the most basic features of the universe.

There are two mechanisms operating here: perceptual occlusion and causal determination—the fact is that the fundamental essential freedom or autonomy of human beings is both hidden *and* overlain by structures of oppression, master–slave relationships, reification, duality, alienation, split and the mystified world

of ideology in which we all live most of our lives. Thus we have both a perceptual mechanism and a causal mechanism. These are difficult to disentangle except conceptually. For are not all beliefs experientially (and to that extent perceptually) informed, or to the extent that they are to be efficacious, e.g. as manifest in the form of wants, do they not include or depend on a perceptual component? At the same time all causal determinations in the human world are informed by cognitive and thus perceptual claims. So the perceptual (or more generally cognitive) and the causal, or the cognitive and causal, metaphors I have used—the surface structures of society occluding and overlaying the deep structures—fit together very neatly.

And this is the basic structure of a dialectic of co-presence, which is very central to dialectical critical realism and critical realism, crucial to the thought of Marxism and the western radical tradition generally, but which is equally to be found in the eastern Vedic tradition where the world of ordinary, surface everyday life is characterised as a world of duality, alienation, split. The central idea here is that man is essentially godlike, subsisting and acting in a world of relativity and duality. A difference springs up only as a product of illusion. And it is the essential nature of man to come to see through this illusion and to realise their self-consciousness as free and/or godlike. We need not go into the details of this basic structure of thought, but it has the characteristics of a dialectic of co-presence and it is equally central to critical realism and western radical, and much eastern, broadly libertarian thought.

Liberation and disemergence

What is the process of liberation then? This must be understood within the context of the development of a dispositional and a categorial realism in which we have the central idea of the multi-tiered stratification of being. Now if the autonomous or the realist level, the potential level, is already in some sense actualised, but overlain and occluded by the heteronomous or irrealist level, then to become fully free, an aspiration which would be reflected in a realist categorial structure of the society, what we have to do is to shed, let go, get rid of the heteronomous levels or orders of

determinations, the alienations, constraints and reifications that dominate our contemporary society. And I would argue along the lines of Andrew, but in a different way, that such a society would be based on an ethic of love, unconditional love rather than fear.

Is such a dialectic of liberation anything more than a pipe dream? I think so; for what a pipe dream is the supposition that this world of heteronomy, of irrealism, can carry on indefinitely, because the stratification of being is such that there are one-way relations of dependency between more basic and more superficial strata. Thus the existence of master–slave relationships is entirely dependent on the creativity of slaves. And when we realise that, we realise that if slaves cease to be creative, master–slave relationships would be no more. But, conversely, the creativity of slaves, or the creativity of free human beings, can persist without the existence of master–slave relationships. So it is not that we have to hope that an autonomous or realist society will magically manage to spring into existence. It already is in existence. It is the heteronomous and irrealist world which is entirely dependent on it. This is itself a liberating thought, though thoughts are only truly liberating when geared into action. But it does mean that the world of duality, split, alienation, illusion, ideology, fetishism, money, reification can only survive for so long.

As to what can happen, there are only three possible solutions in terms of logic. One is that the realist, the autonomous, the free, the loving could be entirely suppressed. I am arguing that this is impossible because heteronomy, irrealism, etc. are all parasitic on the truth, on freedom, on love; vice is parasitic on virtue, so that is not a live option. Second, the vicious world could destroy the virtuous world physically and our planet could be destroyed. In that way the vicious world would not sustain itself any further, but the virtuous world would cease to be complete, would not exist, in isolation by itself, as a whole, untainted by heteronomy; and arguments could be adduced to show that this incompletion would have to be remedied (namely by a new round of a dialectic of embodiment). The third is that we pursue a dialectic of liberation and disemergence, of shedding. This is the only feasible solution for humanity, the only way we can go.

I would argue we do this through dialectics of action and inaction, and the chief dialectic of action is the dialectic of desire to and for freedom, which I set out in *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. There are other dialectics of action, some of which I articulated there, and others of which I develop in *From East to West*, but I have not explored dialectics of inaction, except in my recent work, to the same extent. Basically, if you want proof of realism, or autonomy, of your own freedom and sense of self, what you have to do is *access* it; so you need a dialectic of access, and this ties up with the point Doug was making about religious experience, which is a specific form of a dialectic of inaction. Then you need to *shed* those heteronomous, irrealist, alienated levels and layers of determination. Thirdly, you need to fully *embody* or embed the autonomous real, in all the existing strata and levels of society, so you need something like a dialectic of embodiment. And finally you need a dialectic of *witnessing* or self-consciousness because this has to be subject to rational control and critical scrutiny and done to the level at which humanity's full potential and powers, including powers for further development, flourish, as an embodied, emotional and a rational species.

Transcendental experiences

Now I said I would say a little bit, picking up from Doug, about how transcendence and ultimata fit into this.

First transcendence. If we go back to Hegelian dialectic, I have argued that the four central features of Hegelian dialectic are its *rational kernel,* its *mystical shell,* its *golden nugget* and its *platinum plate*. The rational kernel consists essentially in a dialectical learning process which involves transcendence to a greater totality, depending upon the resolution of oppositions, conflicts, contradictions, aporiai, and the restoration of lacunae and other incompletenesses, by resort to a greater totality; and of course the greater totality we are concerned with in this human world is the totality of the human race in our natural environment (in what I have called four-planar human being). The mystical shell is ontological monovalence, or the absence of absence. The golden nugget is the dialectics of co-presence, and the platinum plate is

the diagnostic value of philosophy. What the mystical shell, the absence of absence, does, is to occlude the central moment in the rational kernel. This is precisely the very moment of transcendence in which we reach for a new, greater, synthesising, transcending concept. It is that moment of human creativity which comes *ex nihilo,* out of the blue, which cannot be sustained by reference to inductive or deductive norms; that moment of transcendence which inspires the scientist and the artist and which people find or claim to find in religious worship that we have to start investigating and taking seriously as well as critically. Every human act, every genuine transformative human act, comes *ex nihilo* from the absence on to a more or less well prepared immanent ground, prepared by prior rounds of transformative work, and consists in the operation of a transcendent cause on that immanent ground. This starts to put religious experience in the same sort of category as transcendental experiences in general, from moments of scientific and artistic inspiration to moments of a more quotidian nature but essential to all human transformative praxis.

Now where does the ultimatum idea come in? Higher order or more basic categories are epistemologically transcendent, but ontologically immanent, and in particular, ingredient in lower order or more superficial categories.

And so one would typically expect something like a new idea which was coming from 'out of the blue' or from an undiscovered stratum of reality or dimension of being, to be coming from a stratum which was both *epistemologically transcendent* and *ontologically immanent*. Now it is important to note that god or the ultimatum, whatever it is, has to be ontologically ingredient in all the lower order strata to some degree and in some respect or other. So this would justify the view, if we were going to talk about god, of the ontological immanence of god in man. This may be thought to raise the questions: does god create man or does man create god, or is man in fact god, or is the true essence of god man rather than the true essence of man god, is that what god is? However, if there is an ultimatum, whatever the value of such speculations, this idea of ontological ingredience must not encourage any sort of anthropocentricity. Because if there is an ultimatum it will far outweigh humanity. So we should not

become too conceited by the idea that man's essence may be godlike. Because man's essence, if it is godlike, will itself be part of a totality which is far greater in width and depth than man himself, so this idea gives no cause for a resort to anthropocentricity. God, as an ultimatum, is ingredient in, but neither exhaustive of nor saturated by, man and man's world; that is to say, god is partially manifest in it, and, as part of him, as it.

I hope these few remarks have justified, a little bit, the legitimacy within a critical realist discourse of making the points Doug was making. I have put them in the contexts of a more general realism about transcendence and realism about ultimata, because I want to get away from existing disputes we have about religious experience. There are very many forms of religious experience. Ontological realism about god is consistent with epistemological relativism about our modes of experiencing him and judgmental rationalism about religious beliefs and experiences—not all of which are legitimate and some of which are no doubt heinous. I am trying to get a debate going by putting Doug's talk of religious experience and the talk of others with religious experience within the category of transcendental experiences, so that they can then have a place in the scrutiny and the discourse of critical realism. And if we can think of god, breaking free from customary connotations, as the ultimate categorial structure of the universe—which is what I think people who talk about god do in fact think of god as—in fact, then we can get a different perspective on the philosophy of religion: one which makes god immanent in man but gives no grounds for anthropocentric conceit. For, to repeat, god neither exhausts nor is exhausted by man or his world.

Powers of liberation and survival

However, it does give us grounds and support for arguments in favour of liberation. Because, if we have within ourselves, whether we believe it is god or not, all the powers of the ultimate constitution of the universe, dispositionally real and indeed actualised in ourselves, though occluded and overlain by structures of heteronomy, alienation and irrealism, then there is nothing we cannot achieve. The main thing I think we want to achieve is freedom,

and to achieve this all we have to do is to shed the illusions and the ingrained structures which hold us in thrall. But if we can come to the realisation that at the deepest level we are autonomous, that if we are slaves or otherwise oppressed, we are nevertheless free, a freedom upon which all oppression ultimately depends; if we can realise that we are such beings as a dialectical critical realist and perhaps a transcendental dialectical critical realist describes, then we do have grounds for the belief that ours is the struggle for the survival of humanity. For humanity cannot survive unless we become free. Conversely, if we become one with our ultimatum or godlike essence then we have all the powers of the universe at our disposal, and there is a chance that, if we learn as much from Marx and perhaps the Vedics as we do from contemporary sociology, we may yet win through to a world in which we can live in a stance of unconditional love for ourselves and each other and for every other being (or for that matter non-being) in our environment.

So these were just a few ideas picked up from Doug's talk, but which I go into in a systematic way in *From East to West*.

Margaret

You say that the ultimate human desideratum is freedom. I would question whether freedom is the ultimate desideratum on the grounds that freedom is either a freedom *from* or a freedom *to*, which implies that it is incomplete in itself. You said it would lead to our acting in unconditional love. I would be very tempted to put those two the opposite way round: yes we need to be free to live in an unconditional love but the ultimatum, the ultimate state to which the whole of humanity is groaning and struggling is that creative expression of ultimate fraternity.

Roy

What I meant is, what we need *now* is freedom. The ultimatum is not freedom. The desideratum is freedom, the ultimatum is unconditional love. It is interesting that in your very words, when making this point with which we both agree, you talked about creatively expressing unconditional love, so creativity is essential to human being. I do not think that, either for human beings or

for a generalised psychology of them, action is such a great problem. I believe that we have got to think through all the categorial domains of dialectical critical realism and that this transcendental deepening or radicalisation of dialectical critical realism (which I am calling transcendental dialectical critical realism) will lead us to see that really the best action, and indeed most action, is basic, that is, it is pretty spontaneous; it is not calculating instrumental action. Moreover, most action is not narrowly self-motivated, although thinking action may often be so self-motivated. Indeed I would say that we are faced with an option in ethics of two ethical stances; one based on spontaneous unconditional love and the other based on instrumental conditional reasoning, and I think particularly that unconditionality in love and in reasoning go hand in hand and that our society suffers from a surfeit of conditionality and instrumentality superimposed upon basic action, whereas good action is spontaneous and pretty natural. It is the sort of action, if one had to use an analogy, of the sun or a flower. The sun does not try and shine, it just shines; a flower does not try and grow, it just grows. And human beings left to themselves are lovely, they will find out how to use language, they will love each other, we can organise a society without reified structures (including ultimately I believe money), just give us a chance.

Question

I have a problem with the word/concept freedom. Kant defined it almost as one phase—you would not want to define freedom as freedom from causal determination, for example. Part of the causal structure of the world is other people with complex wants, desires and beliefs.

Roy

What you say is absolutely true: humanity is essentially one, but each human being is essentially unique, concretely singularised and each is different. I cannot see a huge social problem there, we still have to negotiate, we will still have problems caused by the complexity of whatever wants we have, but we may find our wants moving in an unexpected and more simple and easily satisfiable way, there is no reason why not. Take the structural wants

in our existing society: you have to cars, what do you want next—three, then four, this is absurdity, there is a finite number of cars that any family or any person needs. And so, it is not necessarily true that greater freedom will result in an indefinite perpetuation of wants or social conflict; it could result in greater simplicity, greater harmony, greater love of the elements, greater enjoyment of each other's company.

Margaret

There is another side to this which is very compatible indeed with your stress upon creativity, because just the celebration of the unconditionality of love without introducing the wisdom, the prudentiality, the consideration of the good of the other being, or what Andrew calls in his St Augustine section the loving in due order, is not actually going to resolve any of those problems. But the optimistic thing it seems to me is that just as all these distortions happen on our freedom because of the society in which we live, nevertheless we can see endless exemplifications of the creativity of unconditional love exercised in wisdom and judgment in the ordinary ways in which, for example, a mother interacts with her child, which is not to say yes to everyone, but it is to exercise a discretion and leading out, and encouragement which is all of those things, or what you mean by the necessary creative moment in the exercise of love.

Roy

Yes, and I mean that I think that such a society will be characterised centrally by difference and change, it will not be stagnant.

Question

You said that 'categorial structures are . . . the most basic features of the universe'. Was this a slip, an endorsement of some sort of grand idealism, or what?

Roy

Transcendental and critical realism has always insisted on categorial realism. Now, what are the categories? They are things like substance, causality, arguably space, time; in the social world, things

like housing, education, money and so on. Now for the critical realist, causality is not a schema imposed upon the world as it is for a Kantian; causality exists in the world. It is not just that Ohm's law or causal laws exist in the world, but that causality and lawfulness and causal lawfulness are real features of the world: so categories are really in the world. Now, if god is an ultimatum or a most basic structure then he/she/it would be something like a categorial structure of a very high order, and this was appreciated by Hegel and Spinoza. However, by talking about ultimata I have tried to defuse it from a lot of theological issues and aporiai; nevertheless it remains of paramount importance to stress that categorial realism is an essential part of critical realism.

Question

So you did not mean conceptual structures?

Roy

No, I mean a category like causality could exist in a world without concepts at all. The conceptualisation of it is in what I call the transitive dimension. It is true that when you have human beings you have both categories and conceptualisations of them but you get wrong conceptualisations of categories, as the Humean theory of causality is the wrong conceptualisation of the category of causality.

Question

Why do we talk about causal structures and also about a category of causal structures, I am not sure about this idea.

Roy

The concept of a category is a basic philosophical concept. It is a concept, but it has a reference, it has a referent in the world. There will still be a difference between talking about the reality of causality as distinct from the subjective or objective idealist notions and talking about the reality of a particular nominated causal law. To say that substance 'is real or that time, space, causality, holism, totalities or the self are real, these are all ultimately categorial claims because they are claims of a very basic significance,

and what they denote is that the object of the term, which is called the category, is real. Categorial realism makes it clear that you can be wrong in your basic characterisation of the world. Therefore when you talk about irrealist and realist categorial structures it is important to distinguish between your conceptual categorisation of the world, which is in the transitive dimension, and the real categorisation of the world, or the categorisation of the world as it is in itself, which is in the intransitive dimension. Categorial realism is a deep part of ontological realism, which is initiated as the reference of our epistemological attempts to classify the world categorially and sub-categorially.

Question

Is god categorially real?

Roy

If god were real, he would be categorially real.

Question

Is the ultimatum real?

Roy

For the purpose of this talk, the ultimate ultimatum is real.

Question

And if it is god, he is responsible for everything, for all the bad things as well?

Roy

Absolutely: the condition of possibility, that is why I talked about this one-way relationship of dependency.

Question

The Church's subjects say that god is responsible for everything.

Roy

It is not quite as simple as that, because this ultimatum provides the conditions of possibility, but does not determine what

happens at lower-order levels. This is the true basis of free will. God, if you like, provides the enabling conditions, man determines, selects, picks out from them, from the totality of possibilities which god affords.

Question

God is unconditional love. This is two people loving each other unselfishly?

Roy

Perhaps one wants to generalise that even further and talk about the whole room loving itself, and all other people in all other rooms, and ultimately the whole universe, unconditionally.

Question

In your book, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, the pulse of freedom is something contained within the historical, the social; it is always there, and always reminds you that it is there. The ethical impulses are quite tightly controlled within that book. What you seem to be doing now is severing the relationship between the historical and the ethical. The idea that 'man is born free but everywhere is in chains' sets up quite an antinomy between freedom and determination, autonomy and heteronomy, and that seems to be open to the criticism that you are simplifying a relationship between the ethical and historical, political and social in a way that gives one a sense of almost: with one bound we are free.

Roy

All these institutions, all these structures are largely historical and social; that moment is there and that is the life blood of it all. What is lacking perhaps in *Dialectic* is a clear idea of the actuality of autonomy, the essentiality of creativity, the immediacy of that transcending moment which is the inspiration and driving force of every human act. To say *we are* essentially free, that *we are* free in actuality, although this is occluded and overlain by the structures in which we live, is a profoundly liberating thought, and it will inspire that impulse, that pulse which I described in my book

Dialectic. The pulse doesn't just come when the slaves revolt, the slaves are in revolt because they realise they are essentially free. It is this realisation that must be built explicitly into the structure of critical realist thought, before it was there only implicitly. Critical realists think they have got the truth, or something close to it, about the categorical structures of society, but everywhere we see the dominance of irrealism, as for instance in postmodernist or positivist thought. Perhaps it is important to assert the reality and actuality of those real and auto-nomous structures as *there*, even though they are so invisible to us. Perhaps in this moment of time we need to grasp them, realise we are free and we can do it: humanity can survive; the world is fundamentally realist and human beings are essentially free. But they still have to realise this freedom, they are not only essentially free, they have to become *only* free: they are essentially free but in actuality oppressed, so that they are both free and unfree, or less paradoxically only partially free (because their freedom is overlain by oppression). This is putting the dialectic within a context which looks antinomic initially, but isn't really because the dialectic, involving the co-presence of freedom and unfreedom, is stratified and moving the whole time. In a way, it is just making clear that the basis of the drive to freedom rests on the actuality of our essential freedom.

Question

Despite your qualification that universal love was only the ultimatum, I have noticed that several times in your books you talk about universal love as the immediate necessity, as if it is what we all need to be driving to. Now, it strikes me that this was Feuerbach's philosophy. Feuerbach was a humanist who wanted to liberate people's potential, but as Marx pointed out he could not do that because he was not able to identify the right questions, was unable to draw the class divide correctly, and was not able to analyse the structures of capitalist society. I am not accusing you of being a Feuerbachian, but I think that you should deemphasise the idea of unconditional love in your work. Relatedly, in your four-fold dialectic of liberation you gave the final, fourth dimension as being a philosophical reflection on what had been achieved, but it seems to me that the philosophical reflection needs

to go in before. This is something I don't understand about your treatment of Hegel, you seem to treat him as almost like a bourgeois sociologist rather than somebody who through philosophical elaboration managed to re-establish the dialectic in modern philosophy which was the ground for Marx to be able to then write his books.

Roy

First, there is a sense in which Marx was also a humanist, although he was quite correct in his critique of Feuerbach that he left out the necessary social and historical dialectical mediations. So I am not a Feuerbachian. In respect of Hegel, I think that maybe in *Dialectic* I was too tough to him and didn't give sufficient merit to him. The rational kernel of the Hegelian dialectic was a profound rediscovery and I accept my (perhaps) underplaying of it in *Dialectic* as a self-criticism. But it is still the case that in the mystical shell there is ontological monovalence—the absenting of the concept of absence—and with the concept of absence goes transcendence and the capacity to move to a greater totality, which is the rational kernel of the dialectic. So he does eventually undermine himself. I don't think that there is much difference between myself and the questioner.

Question

You say that the slave has a right to say no, but your concept of freedom seems buried in the ontological depths; in the context of the world, in the context of political action, it does not engage in any level of practicality.

Roy

I think that what you are saying is that it is a very deep freedom, but Marx realised that it was characteristic of capitalist society that we had free labour—the worker had a choice (of a kind) whether to be a wage slave or not—and that differentiated it from, and was a progressive advance on, former modes of production. It is at that level of generality that I am talking about freedom. Unless you accept it, you cannot get very far in a liberatory or emancipatory direction. Once you accept it, you still have all the

spade work to do. What I am trying to do is to restructure or reorient the parameters of our thought on these basic issues, not to say that we should not be thinking about the local elections, or day to day bread and butter issues. . . . Unless you start from unconditional love you will not get the right answer.

Question

How can we start from unconditional love? There are many problems about the whole concept that need to be unpacked. How for example can I love the tribe of fleas that infect my body and carry the plague, how can I love them unconditionally?

Roy

Firstly, you have to accept some sort of hierarchy of being. You talk about a moral dilemma for you, so we have to do this in discussion and presumably there will be rational ways of resolving it. Secondly, you have to consider in talking about unconditional love for a person what it is that you love about that person. I would say that what you should unconditionally love about a person is their intrinsic self, essential nature that would be what would have been called, in the olden days, their higher, noblest or best self, not all their vices and irritating habits, let alone the fleas that dwell in their pores.

Question

But we have to love all these things surely?

Roy

No, other things being equal, if it did not get in the way of humans or other beings we should love fleas.

Question

But it is part of a flea's essential nature to bite me. But you tell me that I should love them.

Margaret

No, he is talking about a hierarchy of being, just as Andrew's book was about this.

Question

Andrew was saying we should love all being.

Margaret

. . . In due order.

Roy

There are two things: first there is a hierarchy of being, and secondly there is the question of what is it about those beings that you love; and you love their essential, best or highest qualities, and certainly biting you is not a very high quality of a flea. If you could have a population of fleas, isolated from human beings, there would be no reason not to love them because they have their own existence as a species.

Question

This is getting away from the point. Purpose, analysis, politics, practice. It is just not helpful to keep talking about unconditional love.

Roy

This is a starting point. We must still recognise different levels of discourse and philosophical discourse. In particular at the level of generality at which we are talking now, philosophy is providing a tool kit for the set of tools that you actually use in social analysis, it is underlabouring for underlabouring. It is at a very high level of generality and refinement, but it is necessary to get our concepts clear. Unless we get our categories clear, we will not be able to do all those nitty gritty things that some members of the audience want us to turn our attention to. That is the heart of social work and social change and social analysis. And that is what we talk about most of the time, but we have philosophical workshops and seminars like this to enable us to do our social analysis and social transformation in a more clear headed and hopefully more inspired way.

Question

You said that we are actually free, not merely potentially free, but then you say that we are actually oppressed.

Roy

Yes we are essentially, actually but only partially free, not completely. We are both free and oppressed: that is the dialectics of co-presence. The dialectic of liberation is a dialectic of disemergence, which turns fundamentally on shedding that part of ourselves which is heteronomous or unfree.

Interlude

Critical Realism, Transcendence and God*

Roy circulated the twelve propositions below, shortly after the discussion from which Chapter five is drawn, for an informal discussion with critical realists which he contextualises at the beginning of the discussion.

Twelve Propositions on Transcendence, Critical Realism and God

1. *Ontological realism* about God [in the intransitive dimension] is consistent with *epistemic* (more generally experiential) *relativism* [in the transitive dimension] (including pluralism, fallibilism and diversity) and *judgmental rationalism* [in the intrinsic aspect]; and in particular with the view that god

(a) manifests himself; and/or
(b) is accessible (e.g. as a transcendent entity in moments of transcendence) in a variety of different ways.

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* Debate with Critical Realists, London, December 1999.

[In particular note that ontological realism about god is consistent with the view that there may be one, many or no gods; and if there is at least one god that there is perhaps something more fundamental than (cf Taoism) or co-equal to (cf Dualism, Manichaeism) it].

2. The *experiential* (or epistemic) *transcendence* of god is consistent with his *ontological immanence*, immanence within being, as indeed constellationally overreaching it as the ultimate (dispositional but constitutive) *ingredient* categorial structure of the world and the alethic truth of the rest of it. But god is neither

(a) saturated by; nor
(b) exhaustive of the rest of being (including man).

3. As ontologically *ingredient* [though arguably perhaps only in moments of transcendence] but not *saturated* by man, god is both

(a) ontologically immanent; and
(b) ontologically transcendent—defining an immanence/transcendence spectrum discernible in particular religious traditions and practices.

[God can be neither completely transcendent nor completely immanent. For god must be at least partly immanent if experience of him is to be possible and at least partly transcendent as wider and deeper than man if non-experience of (at least part of) him is to be possible].

4. As ontologically *ingredient* but not *exhaustive* of man (or four-planar social being), god provides only the conditions of possibility of man's activity. God affords or enables, but man selects and determines. The existence of god is thus consistent with error, evil, illusion and 'structural sin'. In particular the presence of god may be occluded and overlain by levels of objectified illusion, alienation and other modalities of structural 'ill-being'.

5. God is at once *real*, as an alethic ground of (inter alia) pure dispositionality; *actualised*, as both transcendent being and immanent (ingredient) constitutive structure; and experienced and *experienciable*, in different ways, by man, most notably in moments of transcendence.

6. God *creates* (cf as *a* or *the* ultimatum), *contains*, unifies and bounds [as a fount of unconditional (unifying) love], *categorially defines* (as existentially constitutive structure) and *grounds* (as alethic truth) the rest of the universe, including man.

7. The *grounds* for god's existence are experiential and practical. And god may be more or less experienced and realised by man.

8. The *telos* or role of human being is to maximise the presence of god in man, society and the rest of being.

9. God is a *transcendent* being, although also ingredient [cf as ultimate categorial structure and alethic ground of all grounds] in and experienced by man. What is transcendent lies beyond or between experience, but may be in principle (as in the dialectic of discovery in science) accessed in experience. It may be unbounded or bounded and god may be experienced in either an abstract or a concrete, e.g. personalised, form. And the experience of god may be non-dual (e.g. one of identity or engulfment) or dual (e.g. one of adoration, accompaniment or witnessing).

10. *Transcendence*, like transcendent, is a relative term. But within the transcendence of a position, situation, problem or dilemma (e.g. in a dialectical learning process) there is a moment of transcendence, characteristic of creation *ex nihilo* in science, artistic inspiration and transformative practices generally. Such moments of transcendence may take the form of awe and/or engulfment in aesthetic and/or religious solitude (e.g. the silence of a Quaker meeting) or in the bustle of activity. It may be dual or non-dual. When the experience is one of god it is typically called spiritual or religious. The qualities of god may be apprehended, as effects, and described as such after transcendence experiences, even if they are in themselves beyond apprehension or in those experiences (perhaps necessarily) beyond description [since they may be ones of subject–object identification].

11. Man is alienated from god, the cosmos quid his intrinsic nature. De-alienation depends essentially upon dialectics or practices expressing or informed by—that is, of—*unconditional love*. Such love expands, heals and unifies (whereas fear contracts, divides and splits). And de-alienation then becomes a process of

love for, and therefore union with, the source of all union with the universe—its fundamental binding ground, god or pure unconditional love. Unconditional love is fundamentally for god and the presence of god in the world (in being) is fundamentally that of unconditional love, as the unifying, totalising, liberating force of the universe.

12. As god is its highest order condition of possibility, the ultimatum in the stratification of being and the fount of all possibilities, a permanently or enduringly '*fallen world*' characterised by conceptual, real and self-alienation and the alienation of man from God and the rest of the cosmos is not a sustainable one.

* * *

I will have to contextualise this slightly first. Doug (Porpora), Andrew (Collier), Maggie (Archer) and myself are intending jointly to write a book on "Transcendence: Critical Realism and God".[1] We have spent two weekends, both at Brahmes Hall,[2] discussing issues of transcendence, and we found a high degree of convergence, but not identity. It is an independent initiative which is developed from within critical realism but reaches outside it. The first part of the book would be a manifesto which would be written jointly by the four of us. These are twelve propositions which are central to the manifesto which I have formulated. They are my formulations, so I alone take responsibility for these propositions; though I even disagree with one of them! It is not supposed to implicate the CCR or critical realism in any way, it just is twelve propositions on transcendental realism, critical realism and god. As you read through it you will see where the

[1] Roy has since withdrawn from this project, which will be published by the other three, with his good wishes, by Routledge, London (forthcoming). According to Roy the main difference between him and his three colleagues lies in Roy's emphasis on ingredience (which is thematised in the discussion), which makes his position at once more compatible with a purely secular interpretation and also to an immanentist understanding of the presence of the divine within being.

[2] In East Anglia, where Roy was living at the time.

critical realism comes in and I think the best thing to do, before we have a general discussion on it, is to ask me questions or make comments on the propositions.

I suppose, to break it down, the first proposition asserts a very general theorem of critical realism, that ontological realism goes alongside epistemological or experiential relativism and judgmental rationalism, and applies that theorem to god. Now in the square brackets I imply that ontological realism about god is consistent with no god (as well as one or, many gods); so that would make atheism an ontologically realist position. Now in one sense that is right. But in another sense, and this is the only bit of the propositions I disagree with, it is sort of missing the point. Because the whole thrust of this is to be ontologically realist about god in the sense in which, in *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, I am an ontological realist about structure, contradiction and process.

So what I would like to say is that there are positions about god which collapse it into an epistemological or a purely judgmentalist position (so committing the epistemic fallacy) or which reduce it to its role in society (and I am thinking about constructionists, fictionalists etc.), which are not consistent with ontological realism generally. Against this the ontological realism about god that I am defending here is actually saying that there is, as is clear from the thrust of the next six or seven propositions, in fact something like god which does *manifest* and is to human beings, and is *ingredient* in them in specific ways. So that would take us on then to the sort of grounds for such a proposition and the simplest ground lies in experience and the particular kinds of experience that people do have who engage in specific forms of practices, which need not be religious.

These experiences are what I call transcendence experiences and the two crucial propositions here really to get the whole argument going are 9 and 10; and so you might want to take me up in the first instance about this because this should be pretty common ground for all of us.

I think the notion of the transcendent is actually presupposed by transcendental realism and the notion of transcendence is presupposed by dialectical critical realism. So if we can agree

on those propositions then we can move through to other ones, say the notion of an ultimatum, which is a category that I used in *Dialectic* and again used after Doug's talk as a general definition of god, which in some way abstracts from his religious (I am using the word here in a gendered way obviously only for heuristic reasons), from his specific, spiritual, religious qualities. So my suggested way of dealing with this would be to look first at transcendence and the transcendent.

Andrew Collier

I am wondering why, when Roy spoke about god or, he said god or something like a god and that seems to me to be a big possible difference, and one question I would have would be, what would be the difference between substituting the word humankind with a capital H, wherever god is put in this paper. The second point I would raise is there cannot be any such thing as creation *ex nihilo* in science, artistic inspiration or transformative praxis.

Roy

I would like to take you up on both those points. I think you cannot substitute humankind for god just simply because of the non-anthropocentricity which has always been characteristic of transcendental and critical realism. Man is very obviously in the universe and if I am defining god, as I do in my book *From East to West*, basically as being the ultimate categorial structure of the world, which is ingredient but not exhaustive of man, and which is ingredient but not saturated by man, so at this most basic categorial structure the world must also encompass in some mariner and in some form things besides man. It must be wider and deeper than man, so that is why we cannot simply substitute humankind for god, because god, whatever he is, whatever the ultimatum or the absolute or whatever you want to call it is, is going to be the widest and deepest category in the world.

Alan Norrie

I would come back on that and say that by humankind I would not mean man. Humankind as a species being is of course both a social and a natural animal.

Margaret Archer

I still think your emphasis is anthropocentric. One thing we can concede to Alan is that god like any other category, or concept is something we can still only know under our own particular descriptions.

Roy

The whole force of transcendental realism is to assert that one can make propositions about the world as it exists independently of human beings and I am applying that same logic to argue that the world is structured, dynamic, is totalising and I want to say ultimately is holistically unified by an ultimatum category which is something like god. Now Maggie's point is in a way an obvious one but it is worth stressing, whatever god is and whatever a structure is, whatever a person is, whatever object of experience it is always known under a particular description in a particular way and that is where the epistemic relativism comes in. So I do not think we disagree on that, or we should not disagree. Now on the question of transcendence you are absolutely right. If we turn to proposition 10 there are two basic inflections of transcendence, one is a relative on which we talk about the transcendence of a situation and you yourself in your brilliant commentary and reading of *Dialectic* have seen that emergence is the general positive bi-polar dual of absence and transcendence is what happens when emergence takes place, and I think that the first part of the next sentence makes it clear that this is a very general characteristic of all dialectical learning processes.

We talk about the transcendence of a position, a situation, problem, dilemma, relationship whatever. It need not be a dilemmatic one, it can just be when you move to a new higher vantage point even without a tension.

But the point is that this is absolutely crucial and this is where creation comes in—that the point is that at the moment of creation, the point of emergence itself cannot be induced or deduced from the pre-existing situation. It is the irruption of something qualitatively new, something that was not there before and this is what I called creation *ex nihilo*. But it is of course always from a transcendent cause on to an immanent ground.

Creativity only strikes fertile ground. It is never simply algorithmic. It is always a sort of miracle, a marvellous miracle which is intrinsic to human nature. Moreover, in so far as praxis is genuinely transformative, it always embodies an aspect of creation *ex nihilo* and this defines the novelty, the irreducibility and irreversibility in the development and evolution of the human species. I think it is a remarkable feature about the world that emergence occurs, that it is irreversible and tensed, that new things do happen and this is just what the old deductivist and inductivist logic could never account for in science.

All creativity and creation is *de novo*, and all creativity *de novo* contains a moment of creativity *ex nihilo*, from the epistemically unmanifest. But the epistemically unmanifest is not neces sarily ontologically non-immanent. (In fact it is difficult to see what is meant by the ontologically non-immanent.) If it is ontologically immanent then it could come from within and/or without, the first tends towards platonic anamnesis, the second to a self-revelation of an alethic truth of another being to or in an experience which is prepared for or attuned to it. The first points in the direction of an immanent ingredient ground (in which possibly all other truths may be enfolded). The second points to its ground in something like the cosmic force of love. On the second we have the accessibility of an alethic truth outside us, in virtue of something like the cosmic force of love, at the level of what I have called the ultimatum, an ultimatum, which in virtue of being one universe is going to enfold us all and make access from one region or experience or part of it to another in principle possible, as the ultimatum would contain the ground of all alethic truths; this ultimatum is always going to be greater than any particular ingredient within it.

Now, to revert to transcendence, in that sense, that moment of transcendence within the transcendence that is absolute transcendence, it is creation from nowhere on to am immanent ground, and that has correlates in the sort of inspiration that artists find when they suddenly make a breakthrough or the inspiration you might find when you are going for a walk in nature. I personally, if you want to know my own personal experience of god or what I would call god, they come as much from nature or music as

they do from anything which is a specifically religious practice and these are experiences of transcendence. Now in this particular context where they are experiences of something other than oneself they typically break down subject–object identity, they are typically experiences in which one finds oneself in a non-dual state in which one is engulfed, in which one is inspired, in which they are experiences of awe, or identity (but not necessarily), they can also be dual experiences where you experience some being or entity or thought which gives a specific quality to one's experience. Which here I say non-legislatively allow it to be self-defined as spiritual or religious, which is am experience which the person who has it calls one of god or the ultimate or the absolute. So there is really a three-way progression, there is transcendence in the relative sense which is very unproblematic, there is transcendence in the absolute sense which is the moment of creation *ex nihilo*, then there is transcendence in the specifically spiritual sense which may be either dual or non-dual where what the person who is experiencing believes subsequent to that experience, or in that experience he is experiencing is an experience of god himself.

What we are dealing with here is clearly a dialectic, involving the co-presence of duality and non-duality. Now duality sows the seeds of dualism and dualism inevitably generates a contradiction, conflict and split. Reasserting the role of non-duality, more generally the role of the transcendent, which I here identify with the ultimate ingredient in man, allows us to capture a sense in which the reaffirmation of that realm of non-duality can set the agenda for a dialectic of disemergence, which would liberate the elements of heteronomy at present overlaying that essential ingredient element; and roll back the realm of duality, generating dualism and oppositional split, so better enabling us to fight the war between war and peace, heteronomy and autonomy, duality and non-duality. This is a different war, a different struggle to the wars and struggles within the realm of war, heteronomy and duality. It is a war on and against the ground of the dichotomies and oppositional splits which occupy most of our thoughts and attention today. Recognising the realm of non-duality is the first step for liberating it and allows us to shift the balance of forces in the co-presence of duality and non-duality, and so empower the

dialectics of disemergence or shedding both within us and outside us, in the rest of creation.

Now, to go back to the experience of god, the condition of possibility of this is that god is ingredient in man, that is my own thesis. That to be able to have this subject–object identification with god or the divine, we must ourselves be in some manner or part, divine, or godlike. I argued this in more secular terms at the meeting on critical realism and ethics when I said that we are essentially free but our freedom is occluded and overlain by layers of illusion, alienation, dualism, split, reification, commodification. This form, this dialectics of co-presence, the dialectics of autonomous and heteronomous determinations in man, is characteristic of the structure of both western and eastern, both libertarian and mystical thought.

Andrew

So is there anything special in saying that god is ingredient in man, are you prioritising man in that?

Roy

I myself would say, absolutely, each species has to be concretely singularised, and the ancient Greeks had a dispute about whether each species should not have a different god because each species sort of formed god in its own image. I would say that at the basic structure of the universe god would be ingredient in everything. One could even say that god is ingredient in evil, though only in the sense that the energy and power of the most ultimate level in the universe would need to be utilised or abused in some way in order to sustain itself within that universe.

To say that god is ingredient in man (and to suppose that this ingredient is a particular person's alethic truth or essential nature) is to say one or both of two things:

1. That there is actually a bit of god in man; and/or
2. That there is actually the potentiality within that person or being, the potentiality to access, in virtue of the ingredience of god in man, all the alethic truths of all other things which are bound by the same ultimate which sustains the whole

> universe and manifests in particular forms in particular beings as their own deepest, most essential, nature or their specific alethias.

To go back to the question of the particular form of god, and the form that we find easiest to worship, would be a form in which it was embodied in a personabilistic or human lifelike way. Thus if you were a Christian you would say you worshipped god in the form of Jesus or if you are Hindu in the form of Krishna, a Buddhist possibly in the form of god. You can certainly combine an impersonal conception of an absolute god, such as the Hindu Brahman and a relative or personalistic conception of a particular deity or form of manifestation of the absolute. And this is also the way in which a fundamental monotheism, at the absolute level, is susceptible to a variety of different religious declensions and within any one religion interpretations or practices of communion or worship. In other words one can accept that there is a single god which manifests itself in a variety of different ways to peoples of different religions. But I am not a theologian. I am an ontologist and this is relatively new territory for me. I have only been interested in these issues seriously for the last couple of years.

Andrew

I suppose your response there would knock me back to my first question which is why not talk about humankind, if you are going to say that it is ingredient in man, that there is some special nexus there then you are as anthropocentric as I was.

Roy

Not at all, I mean this is the way we know him. I may have grounds for believing there are lots of other universes besides the universe I apprehend but the only universe I can describe is the universe I apprehend. I can certainly posit the possibility of universes other than the one I know, and I may know that there are universes (or at least many things) that I can never know because of the limits of my own sensibility. Put it like this, for me god is the basic structure of the world, that basic structure of the world is also

ingredient in man, but in a concretely singularised way: that is in man as a particular species, and then within each human being, as concretely singularised members of that species. So for me, and this may or may not be a far out theological position, each person would have a unique godliness about them. God would both be ingredient in them and may at the same time manifest himself to them in a uniquely singular way. This ingredient may or may not be what Christians have referred to as their souls.

Andrew

It strikes me that you just added the word godly to what *Dialectic: Pulse of Freedom* says anyway.

Roy

If it is justified then it is certainly an important addition; or it may be that godly might be there implicitly or godly might be implicitly in it, but if so it is there without any conscious intent, because certainly god was very far from my conscious thoughts when I wrote that book. However I would say that there is a dialectic, a process at work in intellectual development, in which you will inevitably discover a tacit presupposition of your own work which you had left out. In this case the tacit presupposition lay in the realm of the ultimata. But I think this is the only way of making sense and resolving the antinomies that I went through at that meeting on critical realism and ethics. The antinomy of western libertarianism including communism and Marxism, believing that man is essentially free and that freedom can be frilly realised and yet is everywhere in chains, for instance in societies amok with reification and commodification. The paradox is that we believe realism to be true and yet the surface categorial structure of our society is irrealist. The dialectics of co-presence makes understanding this possible, and I think it can be very liberating. People do often use god as an excuse, as a substitute for action. But if you realised that god in a way only works through you or that god and freedom are two different ways of saying the same thing, or that god and freedom or creativity are only different ways of saying essentially the same thing, slightly

different nuances on a basic level of reality, then I think this thought is quite empowering and puts a great onus on the agent.

Margaret

I accept the transcendent moment in science, but how is this a development of critical realism which until now, as I understood it, has based its claims on rationality?

Roy

What I do in my forthcoming book[3] is to try and show how dialectical critical realism, through its different moments, successively uncovers deeper and more elemental presuppositions in the stratification of being, thus not only dispositional but categorial realism, not only transcendence but also transcendent totality, at a level which is ultimate, which together amounts to a rough approximation of what some traditional theologies would have called god, but also has an experiential aspect, in what people apprehend as spiritual experience, as the experience of the divine. So I am only making out a plausible case; it is not like an ontological argument, it is not a proof of god's existence, it is just saying that this is consonant with critical realism, critical realism can make sense of a lot of theology, a lot of religious or spiritual practice, while in its judgmental rationalist aspect critiquing practices from many points of view; and from many points of view I should say religions are the worst enemy of true spirituality. I can make sense of it and it actually expands our conceptual repertoire if we begin to talk about ultimates; and then translating it into slightly more human terms, we talk about categories like love. We have all been very critical of instrumental reasoning and reification; but we have not talked about, have not theorised, so how do we suppose we understand the practice of, their opposites. Do we really know what kind of society we want; and what would be the binding forces of that society if they are not to be money.

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[3] *From East to West*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000.

Mervyn Hartwig

. . . I can see that one can easily get to ultimata and call that god, I do not mind, but what logical steps do you take to get to love. And I would prefer to leave out the unconditional to be frank. Why don't you just call it love?

Roy

The point of calling it unconditional is because most love in our society is conditional and therefore it is not love. Most love is a kind of instrumental reasoning or exchange in terms of which you are working out what you can get for what you give, which is something which is best expressed in the market and not called love.

Mervyn

But how do you relate the ultimata to love?

Roy

There are a set of arguments which relate the ultimata as the fundamental category of the universe to being the binding totalising power, which holds things together, and to the properties of love as expanding, healing and unifying, bringing entities and things together. It might be argued that love is a misnomer if not applied to the human world. However I want to go further than that. In fact I think with suitable graduations you can go from it to the ultimate categorial structure of the universe, the binding holistic power of the universe to love as what I called the cement of the universe (in a deliberate ironical reflection on Hume), to love as a unifying force and a liberating force for human beings. Of course if you only want to use a concept like love to refer to present human forms of love then you are going to find it very difficult to apply it to non-human beings let alone to pure examples of great spiritual love, not to mention the universe as a whole. But part of the dialectical process of thought is stretching our concepts so as to capture realities which we have barely comprehended let alone begun to live.

Maggie

We are going to need some new kind of binding force for socialist post-monetarist utopias, if what is going to hold us together is not going to be the principles of the market.

Mervyn

Is it because we need a concept for what the universe consists of ultimately, that we can relate to that you call it love?

Roy

The argument, if you start with the ultimate categorial structure of the universe, that is the structure that keeps the universe together, that is the binding force, that is the totalising force, this is the sort of thing that we mean by love, as a power of uniting, healing, and de-alienating.

Question

How do you arbitrate between some crazy group of sects and a well authenticated religion?

Roy

This is where judgmental rationalism comes in. You have to be very careful about going from ontological and experiential propositions to judging particular claims about a particular tradition. I would have to know about the particular sect in question. I do not know much about many of them. But I know quite a lot about capitalists, Quakers, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and I know that they all have authentic claims to authentic experience. I also know that many of them engage in practices which can be criticised in terms of the traditions, doctrines and experiences and original intentions of the traditions which they inhabit. Fundamentalism and all kinds of religious chauvinism and communalism are completely contrary to the basic premises of almost all religions. On the other hand within almost all religions you will find a great overlap and sometimes quite surprising ones. For example Sufism and Kabalah and Gnostic Christianity and Yoga

and Vedanta and of course many Buddhist and Taoist practices all show great affinity, they practice similar forms of meditation, and they offer similar characterisations of the ultimate and the way to the ultimate as well as interpretations of the journey of life; they are amazingly convergent. But then of course there are many other traditions which are very different again. Exactly the same in science.

Tony Lawson

I am happier than Mervyn with the things we have been talking about but I am a bit lost when you say god is the widest and deepest structure of the universe. Is that a definition or the development of an argument or what?

Roy

It is the development of an argument, which is why I have a certain objection because the way the rest of the propositions go make it clear that whatever god is, god is the ultimate, the ultimate categorial structure of the world, and I think this is really our position, at least that is my position. There is a sort of meta-ontological realism. I am just saying in my opinion god is, and that whatever god is, god is the ultimate. I am saying now that it is not possible for there to be a more basic category, contrary to what is said in the parentheses in proposition 1. I do not actually believe that propositions 2 to 12 are consistent with the idea that there is a higher category than god. So for me it is pretty definitional that god is the ultimatum. But I do understand that there are religious and spiritual traditions which assert the contrary, though, say in the case of Taoism, I am not even sure that the greatest thing or the greatest ultimate, which is absence or emptiness out of which both heaven and earth emerge, is not also god.

One motivation for referring to the ultimatum as love is because the absolute or ultimate would also have to have all the properties, including the holistic, binding, liberating power which in the human world we call love. Which we insisted must be and is only unconditional.

Question

So how does that differ from life force?

Roy

It is not different. It is the holistic, totalising, evolving, unifying, expanding . . .

Could I just take us to proposition 4. It is ontologically ingredient but not exhaustive of man. A higher-order structure provides the conditions of possibility of a lower-order structure; it does not determine activity at that level. That is vital. Physics defines the conditions of possibility of biological human phenomena, human phenomena define the conditions of possibility of social phenomena. God provides the conditions of possibility and man selects them. And so man and man alone is responsible for evil and in his social aspect for what we call structural sin. That is structural ill being. Now this is really a neat way of resolving or coming close to adequately conceptualising the problem of evil by putting it in the context of a dialectical critical realist concept of the stratification of being. Because god's goodness is untainted by man's evil, if I can put it that way. Now the thing is of course that it is most important to insist that god is both beyond and yet contains though does not cause evil.

If you just take the stratification of being, a higher-order structure will be immanent in, ingredient in, but will typically transcend or exceed or overreach, a lower-order structure. The model of the relationship between god and man is exactly the same as that. I myself would think it very unlikely that the ultimatum did not manifest itself in a plurality of different ways and forms but that is my personal view.

Mervyn

Did you really not think about god before? This is astonishing to me, everyone knew it was going to lead to god. I am merely asking out of journalistic responsibility.

Roy

The honest truth is that I had transcendent experiences in my youth, I became agnostic, atheist in my late teens. I have never been unsympathetic to any forms of experience, I have always been open minded and tolerant, but I had no interest in spiritual or religious phenomena, no particular interest in arguments about god. Up to and including the time that I wrote *Dialectic* and *Plato Etc*.

Mervyn

Did it not occur to you that you might be opening that box?

Roy

No, I can honestly say that it did not occur to me. I was so immersed in the immanent critique, the actual process of critique that the next step did not occur to me. That often happens to scientists, or philosophers or writers; they are so involved in their work that they cannot see the next step whereas someone from the outside can. I had a period of physical illness in the sense that I had a couple of months in which I had a succession of colds and I could not finish another book, which was to be called *Philosophical Ideologies* and which was about ten pages away from being finished. I took a holiday and started thinking about these things, Christmas of 1994. That is the honest truth. Since then I have been trying to integrate practical experiences with philosophical developments in a new direction which is as yet very far from being complete.

Tony

Can you tell me a bit about how you defend proposition 8?

Roy

In so far as we want to say that we have a purpose in life then it must be to realise our true essence. Now the highest order structure within man must be god, if god is ingredient in man. Because by definition he is the ultimatum and our heteronomy and evil, illusion and all the ills that befall humanity come from other emergent levels of structure, which heteronomously block our

freedom and so by maximising the presence of god, our godliness in ourselves, in society and the rest of nature, we fulfil our true intrinsic nature. That is human flourishing. The ethic that brings this out very nicely for me is actually the Bhagavad Gita which makes the very simple point that man is basically like the sun or a flower; and when you think about it, the sun does not try to shine it just shines, so that what we ought to do in our life is to fulfil our true intrinsic nature, our innermost essence. Now for all the reasons I have given, our innermost essence is free, is godlike, is actually a fount of unconditional love and of tremendous untapped possibilities. Put on a social scale it is the free development of each as the condition of the free development of all. And that I see is quite frankly our role in life, that is why we are here, that is the purpose of human existence. And if you try and denude human beings from teleology then I think we are going to end up with a mechanism again. Now some people might have said well, dialectic does not have any use for teleology, but then your external outsider would have said well, it is bound to lead to it sooner or later, and of course there was an implicit teleology in it and this is just bringing it out.

You have got to follow the truth wherever it takes you. If I had gone for popularity I would never have published *A Realist Theory of Science*.

Tony

Strategy does not matter, truth matters.

Roy

I just want to say that I believe the time for this turn is right, it may not turn out that way when my book is read, when all the books are read, when our joint book is read, it may not seem so outrageous, just as it is not so outrageous to you or to Sean or to Tony, even though we have not come to the same conclusions. It may seem outrageous to some critical realists now But then you have to ask were they good critical realists, were they actually accepting arguments on the basis of truth or merely because of gut feeling or popularity or something like that.

Tony

What human practices get you to the idea that our telos is to maximise the presence of god.

Roy

Well there are arguments from the ultimata, arguments from the binding power of the universe, its holistic totalising properties, arguments about the necessity of understanding human beings as evolving, about the co-presence of the autonomous and heteronomous and practices, about practices of love, spiritual inspiration, religious worship, scientific discovery etc.

The thing is that what I think we are all trying to avoid doing is to say: look, there is a simple argument for the existence of god and this is not like an ontological argument, we cannot prove the existence of god in that way. There might be a day we can work out waterproof dialectical and transcendental arguments for the existence of god. But we are not going down that road, at least we are not going down that road for the moment, at the same time we do not want to validate all forms of claimed religious experience, we are talking about the possibilities, the possibilities of apprehending what Margaret has called the intimation of divinity, or what I have called transcendence experiences. For someone who has not had these experiences the notion of god will be a purely intellectual one and it will be that much poorer. For someone who has had these experiences it will be a rich experiential concept as well. To someone who only has those experiences, it will just be an empirical concept without the theoretical richness that it can have. So here again we need reasons and experience, we need the union of the two, just as in science. So you cannot do it by ontological arguments or theoretical considerations alone and you cannot do it by reference to spiritual practices or religious experiences alone; this turn is about the meshing of the two together and seeing how they cohere.

Chapter Six

Critical Realism, Co-presence and Making a Difference*

The first thing I want to say is that critical realism is not a fixed, rigid system of thought, it is not dogma, it is not a set of doctrines. I would like to begin by quoting something that Marx said which is quite well known about the dialectic. But if you substitute critical realism then I think that may also be appropriate. Marx said, 'in its mystified form the dialectic became the fashion in Germany because it seemed to transfigure and glorify what exists. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to the bourgeoisie and their docrinaire spokesman because it includes in its understanding of what exists a simultaneous recognition of its negative, its inevitable destruction, because it regards every developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion and therefore grasps its transient aspect as well and because it does not let itself be impressed by anything, being in its very essence critical and revolutionary.'

I think what we have got to do before we can see how and why critical realism makes a difference is to understand that critical realism acts like a stone thrown into a pond, producing ripples.

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* Introductory Plenary and discussions at CCR/IACR Conference at Lancaster, UK, 18 August 2000.

Ripples that may gather momentum depending upon the circumstances and other agencies. It is a dynamic, multidimensional, expanding research programme in which each moment or aspect is only developmentally consistent with the next or succeeding one. Indeed it may be that from a certain perspective the next moment is the alethic truth of the previous moment; but critical realism is in spread-eagling motion and what part of that dynamic movement you, or any particular individual or collectivity or community or discipline or organisation, is affected by will be entirely dependent on your own particular circumstances, the state, discipline of your art or practice and what you as individuals find authentic and useful and above all true. It is not a dogma, it is not a fixed or closed system of thought; it is a process in continual motion, aiming to convert ripples into waves.

Let us take a few illustrations from the development of critical realism. I will relate this mainly to my part in it, though mine is only one aspect of the whole movement of critical realism. In *A Realist Theory Of Science*, for instance, the transitive dimension was sharply differentiated from the intransitive dimension, so ontology was separated from epistemology That was very important because it was absolutely essential to situate ontology as an important and necessary subject for philosophical discourse. So then of course we have to ask what is epistemology, what is the subject matter of epistemology, systems of thought. But of course systems of thought are themselves part of being. Therefore epistemology has to be included within ontology, and so this very sharp distinction, this very useful distinction between transitive and intransitive dimensions, breaks down. In the same way—I did not realise that my own session was going to be immediately followed by a wholesale attack on my latest book! For the seemingly innocuous concept of the ultimatum that I introduced in the *Dialectic: The Pulse Of Freedom* became in *From East to West* the concept of the absolute which is customarily referred to as god. To be a critical realist you must have a sense of what I think is essential to all intellectual creativity, a being continually on the move. If you stand in the same place then you are basically reifying yourself, your thought and your activity. Moreover you are freezing the world and we as critical realists do not want to do this

individually or as a movement. So the first thing I want to say is that critical realism is not a dogma, is not fixed nor a closed system of thought nor is it identifiable with any one text by any one author. The driving impulse behind critical realism, however, if there is a unified theme, is it does seem to me to be the drive to freedom. And in fact if you think about it freedom is opposed to every form of reification, every form of fixity, every form of rigidity. To be free is to be open mid to be able to be continually on the move, to be in the moment, not to be structured, but not to be unstructured either; and it depends on being deep, on going very deep, as I will indicate later on.

What I am saying is that we are all essentially and basically, individually, completely and totally free. Absolutely free. But we are also oppressed and the basic dynamic behind the research activity of critical realism has been a kind of dialectic in which we progressively get rid of, shed, overcome layers of structures and systems of thought and ways of acting which overlay and occlude and are parasitic upon our freedom. This is by no means unique to critical realism. This is a very characteristic motif of radical libertarian thought. It is essential for the work of both Rousseau and Marx but also to the work of Chomsky and many other libertarians from different schools. The basic presupposition that I want to stress is that we have ourselves, at some level, actually got all it takes, are free and getting it right; but we have also got an awful lot else as well, in virtue of which most of our activity and our life is compromised. That is not just an individual thing, it is a collective thing, what we have got to do is get rid of those bits, those components of the compromise, which are not essential to us. How does this relate to the question of how critical realism or any other philosophical idea can make a difference. Why does it matter?

Well, I think critical realism is in the enormously unique position of being able to say why it itself matters. What critical realists say is that thought, reasons, intentionality are and must be causally efficacious—that is, make a difference to the world. That presupposes the emergence of reasons from physical, material causes and that presupposes that intentionality is causally efficacious, makes a difference to the pattern of material events that

would otherwise not occur. That is a very profound and differentiating feature about critical realism, something which in virtue of its conception of emergence it can sustain (but which many materialists would deny), the claim that thought makes a difference. For agency presupposes intentionality and intentionality presupposes, even when it is spontaneous, thought or belief or ideation of some kind. Moreover, not only is it the case that thought causally affects the world, but it is the case that if we have false thoughts or thoughts that are not true in the world then we are going to make errors and we are going to fall into illusion of one kind or another. Illusions are or can be (though untrue) causally efficacious, make a difference in the world—this is what I have tried to capture in the concept of the 'demi-real'. This immediately makes truth a very fundamental norm. Let us think for a moment about how critical realism in its development can, in virtue of providing truer conceptions of the nature of the world, come to better inform human practice and better inform our understanding of the world and better enable us to lead the lives that I think we are capable of.

I will briefly recapitulate what will no doubt be very familiar to a lot of you, what I think are the five main moments in the development of critical realism. The first was transcendental realism and that essentially situated ontology and it showed the necessity for ontology. Basically what we argued was that every philosophy of science, every epistemology, every system of thought presupposed an account of a world, and that was a very radical thought because people like Wittgenstein had said that there is no need to talk about what the network describes, just talk about language, just talk about the way we talk about the world. That of course was an extremely paradoxical thing to say because that talk about the world was itself in the world, so how do you talk about the world unless that talk about the world had a referent, namely the talk? So actually ontology is inevitable and inexorable. What transcendental realism did was it said not only is ontology inevitable and inexorable, but a particular ontology is inevitable and inexorable. The world is structured, differentiated and changing. The pre-existing epistemologies of the 60s and 70s, just as the non-critical realist ontologies today, presuppose

an account of the world as being flat, undifferentiated and unchanging. If the world is in fact structured and differentiated and changing this brings about a fantastically liberating change in our conceptions of the world. Because of structure there is a lever, because of differentiation we appreciate why we do not always see it and because of change we realise that we can use it. And use it we must.

The second major moment of critical realism was called critical naturalism. This consisted in the attempt to take the insights of transcendental realism over to deal with the specificity of the human sciences. And basically what was happening about the time of the 70s and is still happening today was that the social sciences were split by dichotomies between positivism and hermeneutics, between structure and agency, between individualism and collectivism, between reasons and causes, between mind and body, and between fact and value. In each case the critical realist moment was to say the dichotomies and oppositions were completely false, and that in fact there was a third sublating, transcending position which could situate both the truth and the falsity of the poles of the dichotomy, for instance in doing justice both to the generality of science and the specificity of the social sciences. That led on to the third moment in which explanatory critique came to the fore. Once we accept, as we must with critical naturalism by the way on the second level, that thought makes a difference, once we accept the intentional causality of reasons, then of course it is immediately clear how critical realism can sustain itself and why truth is so important. For the explanatory critical moment said that not only is truth important if you want to avoid error, but that factual truth, truth about matters of fact are in fact presupposed by and can be shown to imply evaluative or factual judgments, so it bridged the great gulf between science and morality that western philosophy had been lumbered with at least since, and probably well before, the days of Hume and Kant.

The fourth element in the development of critical realism, and again I must stress this is just my own interpretation of it, was the dialectical moment. This turns on what Alan Norrie has nicknamed the MELD formula. This was in fact a dynamic structure which turned on four moments. The first was what I called

1M, which is the first moment of ontology, of structure and most importantly of alethic truth. This said that if you go into a multi-dimensional analysis of truth, we can see that ultimately there must be a conception, a level of truth which goes beyond the feeling of trust me, act on it, which goes beyond the feeling of this, is an adequate representation of reality, which goes beyond the feeling of this, expresses the way the world is but goes deeper to the level of saying, this is the reason why the world is the way it is and when we get to that level then we get to the alethic truth of a matter of fact. And that is what characteristically happens in science when a scientist will find the reason for some superficial phenomena in a deeper one. According to the arguments I have lately been adducing *the alethic truth of irrealism is in fact realism*. Similarly the alethic truth of reification, of hypostasised and alienated structures depends on, that is to say the condition of possibility of that, is the essential creativity of human beings. The alethic truth, condition of possibility of heteronomy, of unfreedom is our essential freedom, an autonomy which is masked, occluded, overlain and suppressed, that is actually reduced by the more superficial structures which dominate it, socially and in our everyday practice. So the concept of alethic truth is a very important one. And it takes the whole idea that thought matters, a necessary condition for intentional agency whether in objectified, materialised or purely ideational form, indisputably the dominant force in human history, a degree further to say that getting our conception of the alethic truth of things right really matters and affects our practice essentially.

The second moment of dialectical critical realism was the most important one, at least for me, and this turned on absence. The whole of western philosophy had been dominated by a purely positive conception of being. But just think, for instance, how important the pause is between words, how important space, the gap, the hiatus is in any form. What was above all absent from western philosophy was absence. In *Dialectic: The Pulse Of Freedom*, I argued that the dialectic turned on absence, specifically determinate absence, and gave a recursive definition of it as being the absenting of absences (as constraints) on absenting

absences (as ills). In this second development, what I called second edge, the key notion was of course dialectic itself. In a way I think in that particular book I did not do sufficient justice really to the rational kernel of Hegel. The mystical shell was ontological monovalence, the installation of a purely positivist account of being so that his dialectical idealism was in fact also, as Marx noticed, a tacit positivism. But the rational kernel is very important and very strong. It is a dialectical learning process, a developmental process in which apparently positive contraries are turned, transmuted into special cases of a general or higher sublating position so they appear as negative sub-contraries. And this is the mechanism of scientific progress, the mechanism of every act of creation, this is the stepping, letting the fly out of the fly bottle that Wittgenstein famously talked about; this is what happens whenever we make a conceptual leap, whenever we feel that we have touched a new level or we have grasped a new truth, or we are to a greater degree free. This was the essence of the rational kernel. Now the actual mechanism of the moment of transition in this rational kernel involved what I have called the dialectics of *co-presence*, which turned on the way in which two apparently contrary things can simultaneously co-exist. I will come back to this in a moment. The fourth element in the dialectic was what I called the platinum plate and this was the way in which looking at a system of thought, especially (but not only) a causally efficacious and/or dominant system of thought, that was secreted by a society gave us a clue as to the character of that society. I would say that there is an extraordinary paradox here that realists have to face and that is this: If realism is true, if it is really true, why is it that irrealism is so dominant? Well irrealism is so dominant because it reflects the irrealist, reified, heteronomous, oppressive structures of the societies in which we exist. Realism can only be conceived to be true if it reflects a deeper, more basic level which most of us have not fully developed or have so overlaid with structures that are irrealist in character that we find it difficult either to see why most people are irrealist, reified or unfree or to believe that realism about freedom, spontaneity, creativity, love, can actually be alethically true.

Now most of us would accept. Whatever level or moment of realism we feel to be most important, whatever aspect is most sufficient for us, if realism is really true, then we will have the *co-presence of an irrealist superstructure and a realist infrastructure*. Now that is essentially the model of freedom that I tried to articulate in *From East to West*, this is that although we are all essentially unique, we are all essentially free and the only reason we cannot express this freedom is because that freedom is overlaid, dominated and occluded by structures which are nevertheless completely parasitical upon it. Just as Humean ontology would not work in practice if it did not presuppose critical realist ontology, the network of master–slave relationships could not continue without the creativity and dynamism of the slaves. Similarly no social form could survive which was not sustained at some level by relationships of solidarity and love. What we have got to do, and all we have got to do is to *shed* everything individually and socially that we are essentially not and realise everything that we essentially are. This is a project which can be seen to be continuous, a dialectic of disemergence, with my earlier definitions of emancipation as the elimination of unwanted and unnecessary determinations. Getting now to what we essentially are requires of course a conjugated process which I will simplify here. It requires some mode of access to your freedom and to our social freedom, whether it is in individual or collective form. In fact it is not difficult to get this access, because we utilise it all the time, it is our freedom, our creative ingenuity, our loving here which sustains the whole social edifice and our psychic make up. Realising this access, we become aware of the co-presence within our own being of opposed, autonomous and heteronomous determinations or elements. As it is the autonomous ones which define our essential nature, we will be spontaneously set on a dialectic of liberation. A dialectic of liberation, a project of disemerging that which enslaves us. The requisite, the desideratum is the shedding itself: this is the moment of revolution, the moment of liberation, the moment of emancipation, the moment of our enlightened man. This then requires simultaneously the full embodiment, the complete realisation of that freedom in one's

own being and in our social being. And finally it requires, at each moment, a continual process of witnessing, of being aware of what is going on in and around one, of awareness without judgment; just being aware, that is witnessing itself; will spontaneously lead to the necessary action, flowing from our innermost nature, the ground of our being, at the moment heteronomously compromised. So all we have to do to be free is to get rid of everything that we are not.

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How then does critical realism make a difference; and how is this connected to the theme of the co-presence of good and evil, truth and falsity, of freedom and oppression and all the other opposites we have talked about? Critical realism, in virtue of the causal efficacy of ideas, can make a crucial difference, especially once we accept categorial realism, to the way we think, feel and live our lives in that ongoing struggle, in which a world of non-duality, of transcendence and freedom is dominated and occluded by what it sustains. Critical realism can help to eliminate the perceptual occlusion and cognitive delusion which hides the alethic truth of human beings from themselves: namely the qualities of freedom, creativity, love and intelligence, which sustain, in their expression, in the activities of everyday life, all the structures of oppression which are currently hurtling the planet into crisis and into the very real possibility of an early demise. When we realise, contrary to the claims of vulgar (including I have to say Marxist) materialism, the enormous causal efficacy of ideas we can see how the philosophy of critical realism can come to empower the dialectic of disemergence or shedding, of emancipation necessary to save the human race and the other species with which we co-exist on this planet. In this struggle, there is one enormous factor on our side, namely that there is a relationship of unilateral dependency of those structures of evil and oppression on that foundational layer of good and freedom which I have identified here as the essential nature or alethic truth of man.

Question

I would like to ask Roy Bhaskar whether he sees the moments of critical realism as necessary or contingent, in the sense that they are compatible with other possibilities.

Roy

I would say both. Certainly I think each moment presupposes the next; and I would say that the alethic truth at any one level is the moment that succeeds it, so there is a definite logical order, at least in the way I have tried to develop and present it. However there are also always going to be many possible lines of development. It is a necessary truth that if there is one way to resolve a problem there is in principle and infinite number of ways to resolve that problem. And people in this room have been developing critical realism simultaneously and alongside me in all sorts of different ways. For instance Alan Norrie and Nick Hostettler have been pursuing the dialectical path, while people such as Andrew Collier and Margaret Archer have been working on questions of ultimata and god. But I do believe that all these steps are dialectically related, that is my own belief, one can have sequential development and simultaneous spread. If you want to use one aspect of my work or of critical realism generally that is absolutely fine and if you want to reject a particular thesis or think that a line of research is not fruitful that is fine too. Anything else would be totally inconsistent with my belief in concretely singularised, uniquely individual freedom. Moreover no one's beliefs system should be static, and my view at any one moment of time will not be the same as another; nor in one context as in a different one. All this is consistent, organically, dialectically consistent with transcendental dialectical critical realism.

Question

Do you think that there is a correct or essential interpretation of your work, or is it consistent with multiple interpretations?

Roy

I think it is a completely false theory of meaning to suppose a single unique meaning to any concept, in any sentence or any

text. Meaning is so multilayered, so multidimensional that an author is even not aware of all the meanings that he or she is utilising in trying to put across some point. The interesting thing if you think about critical realist works and critical realism is that we can accept entirely different interpretations of the same basic thesis or argument. Two of the best introductions to my work in particular are books by Andrew Collier and William Outhwaite. They both happen to be friends of mine and very substantial intellects; but they are completely different interpretations and both are completely authentic. Some people have said which has got me right? And that is a question I refuse to answer. They both got me right.

Of course there are certain propositions which I would deny could be deduced from a text; but there is much more in a text than any one author ever intends or knows. So I think what you are implying about multiple meanings is very true. Everything we say has meaning which is holistic, part of a pattern which draws on the past, several lines of development which looks out to the future, which has many levels of depth and has infinite potentiality. All those are, if you like, moments of critical realism. Thus infinite potentiality is a dispositional realist concept. So if we had a true critical realist account of meaning then any monistic account of my meaning, or the meaning of a single word or single sentence, any single meaning interpretation would be completely false. In fact I do not see how a language could be learnt or understood or what point there would be in communication unless we all came from different experiences and so put a different slant or spin on the words and sentences we used and the texts to which we referred, including that text which is the world.

Question

How did it come about that we acquired the baggage which needs to be absented at the moment we arrive? Was there an original state free of what you call heteronomy?

Roy

I would not entirely rule out conceptions of primitive communism. However I do not think at the moment that we can

empirically validate them. Whether there was a point, a moment or span in space and time when we were completely, utterly free, is a very interesting question. However I think the development of our society is now the truly important thing—for oppression is accumulatively building up and ills multiply rapidly one upon the other. Now we are in a very precarious state in which we are actually undermining and destroying the ecology of our planet so it is quite likely and possible that unless we radically transform our social structures and our own individual collective ways of acting that planet earth will not exist as a viable habitat in the next fifty years.

Question

What does the word 'alethia' mean, where did you get that from?

Roy

Alethia really just means real. It is a Greek term for reality and truth. So it is our truth as reality. For me it is a conception of truth which is not an epistemic conception but an ontological one, specifying the deep or ultimate ground of something more superficial apprehended in our consciousness as an epistemically validated truth. It can be translated in Greek as being real or truth, but if it is translated as being truth then it has to be understood as reality as well, and if it is translated as reality it has to be understood as being true, so it is not the false, reified, superficial structures that I am talking about, but the underlying essential grounds. Our true nature, our true self would be our alethic truth. So there are different orders of truth and different orders of reality. We can say some realities are more real than others.

Question

In *From East to West* you highlight an important point about basic action, which is I think indispensable.

Roy

What you are talking about is what in *From East to West* I called spontaneous right-action and when you think about it most of us, when we are having a conversation or discussion or eating a

meal, catching a bus or driving a car, we are not thinking about it, we are just doing it. This is a spontaneous unthought basic action; if you like, non-dual action, that is action not mixed with anything else. So acting in a way which is not mediated consciously by thought is both indispensable and often just right. Thus when you are in a critical situation, you will spontaneously do something which manifests the unconditional love you have within yourself, like rescuing a baby, saving someone else, perhaps saving them humiliation, it does not matter, it will be an expression of unconditional love. If you *think about it* you probably will not do it.

* * * *

Nick Hostettler

I am really much happier with the road you were taking in your dialectical work, than the way you are going now. For instance, when you say things like space time and causality are real entities that would seem to me to be [reifying] them, taking causality for example as an entity existing independently of us. But causality is not an entity, it is a category.

Roy

It seems to me that unless you accept categorial realism you are going to have to go down one of two equally disastrous roads. If you do not allow any level of rich, deep, philosophical description of the world to refer to the world then philosophy can have no purchase on the world. If you do not allow space, time, causality, law to have a referent in the world, then you are going to have to attenuate the totality of levels in being to a single stratum or point which you assume to be the only correct or real level, which would not then allow you to talk about both electronic structure and tables or both tables and the curvature of space. Or else, what you are going to end up doing, which is in effect almost what you did at one point, is to say that being is ineffable, that we cannot name or describe it in any way. I think that is what is going to happen. What I argue in *From East to West* is that there is a fundamental subjectivism about our categories in western

philosophical thought, which you find in Kant, you find in Popper, which does not allow us to distinguish real categories in the world (described in an abstract or high level way by philosophical discourse) from their mis-description in social practice and the ideologies, including philosophical ideologies which reflect that practice. The world contains not just Ohm's law, Boyle's law and countless other laws, but lawfulness as such, along with space time, causality, process, totality; but also falsity and contradiction and error and evil, and so also of course thought, creativity, love and war—war as such, not just particular wars. Are we going to say that there are no processes in the world and that process is not a fundamental category in the world or that holistic causality or relationality does not exist, or that totalities do not exist as such independently of what account we give of them? Because if we say that then we are coming very close to saying something like capitalism does not exist for after all if you read Marx's *Capital*, particularly volume one, which is an account of the capitalist categorial structure of society, this is very much an account of the relationship between wage labour, capital, money, all of which are undeniably categories for me. They are categories, and, as categories they are causally efficacious and crucial to the systems of the reified and commodified world in which we live, quite independently of our descriptions of them, and whether we get them right or wrong. You made a reference to Skinner. Skinner does not seem to me to have a concept of agency, but that does not stop agents acting, we have to say that agency is a real category in the world. The whole structure of the material world, as you call it—and I am going to come back to the 'material world' as described in *Dialectic*—is a categorial structure, the whole system which Alan calls MELD is nothing but a structure of categories.

The claim in *Dialectic: The Pulse Of Freedom* is that it makes an attempt at getting certain very crucial aspects of our reality right. It is a fallible attempt, an attempt which itself would be part of a process in motion. I actually think there are aspects of dialectic I left out, including an undertheorised concept of the transcendent. I actually think you are making too much of the difference between *ex nihilo* and *de novo*. I do not deny that the

creative inspiration always breaks onto ground which is immanently very well prepared, but the inspiration comes out of the blue, in the space between thoughts, in a way which cannot be induced or deduced by a mathematical or mechanical algorithm.

In short categorial structures are real, our accounts of them are fallible, corrigible, correct or incorrect. Now our account of categorial structures are themselves part of reality, and a capitalist account of capitalism is a very important, reified part of capitalism. That is what I want to say about reality. That is all I want to say about categorial realism.

What then about materialism? (the other main objection raised by Alan Norrie and Nick Hostettler; and also by Mervyn Hartwig). What exactly do we mean by this? Everything that happens in the human world happens via, and as a result of, or is mediated by, human intentionality which is an expression of thought in the world. And I think it is a great weakness of the Marxist and the so-called materialist tradition to underplay the causal efficacy of ideas, I really do.

I think the thesis of the rise in the organic composition of capital is completely true, but it takes the form of a rise in the organic composition of ideas, and also I would add in the organic composition of nature. I think you cannot understand technology, machinery, or any of the processes that Marx began to analyse in the labour process and what would normally be understood as being material structures of society without taking into account the role of human intentionality. They are embodiments, externalisations of human intentionality and creative human intentionality is the driving process and underpins monstrous and reified systems like capitalism, just as it does beautiful music or poetry or science at its best. There is too much lack of thought in the blanket invocation of materialism. We do not really understand materialism, it is a woefully underanalysed concept. We do not understand what it is to be a materialist.

Now when Mervyn talks about the biological nature or the animality of being, yes of course we are animals, we are physically embodied, we live in four-planar social space, I never for a moment in *From East to West* attempt to deny that. All I attempt to do is to deepen the account of one aspect of that four-planar

social being which is the stratification of the personality because I think that was very underdeveloped in the dialectic and I think it may be that I am trying to defend the possibility of freedom but this is not, I would have thought, a reactionary position as Mervyn was trying to imply, but something on which any liberation and indeed any thought at all depends.

I agree with Nick that I am trying to defend the possibility of freedom, even a little bit more freedom would be a great thing. Between Mervyn and Nick there seems to be an antinomy, because while you say I am getting too concerned about freedom, Mervyn says I am going all reactionary because in some way I am supporting a commodified logic. I really do not agree with that at all and I must say that I agree neither with a lot of new age nor with a lot of new left. So perhaps Mervyn's was an unhappy choice of description of what I was trying to do in the book.

I am trying to defend an aspiration which certainly, as Mervyn said, Jesus and Buddha had, but so too in a way did Marx and Rousseau, which depends on the possibility that we have an essential or true nature, so that when we have got rid of structural sin and all the oppressed, emergent social structures (including their internalised form within us), and when we have fully embodied and realised our true being, the result will be the sort of society which Jesus, Buddha, Rousseau and Marx all believed was possible. And I would like to hope and believe that is possible. Now if it is impossible I would like to know why. Just because it has not happened so far, does not mean it is not possible.

For instance I think that there are very good grounds for saying that everything we do in the social world depends upon and presupposes human creativity. Every transformative act is in a way a creative act, it contains a moment of novelty that is a *de novo* element within it. Someone who went on doing the same thing over and over again repetitively would be mimicking the kind of reified, hypostasised systems of thought and being which capitalism introduced or, if not introduced, cemented. We forget that it is the creativity of the worker, doing the same thing perhaps over and over again, but always under different and unique conditions, always liable to need to use his own creative

ingenuity to keep the production line going that, in the last instance, sustains capitalism.

If every IACR or CCR conference were the same it would be terrible. What is distinctive about human life is our capacity to make something new, something that was never there before. Now transcendental realism from its very inception said that one of the things wrong with positivism, and that equally its idealist counterparts could not sustain, was novelty, emergence, originality—and together in some way you both seem to be saying these things—do not exist. I am saying that they do and they actually sustain, and are the true underpinning of capitalism and all those other reified systems. If we could just be creative, loving and exist in social and natural harmony, then we would be shot of those reified structures and that is what I believe Marx and Rousseau, and in their own way Jesus and Buddha, believed, and that is what I believe, and that is also what I think you believe Nick!

On to ultimata and their relationship to god. When I introduced the concept of an ultimatum in *Dialectic* I was thinking of two things. One is the limits of our knowledge which I call epistemie ultimata in *From East to West*, and the other is the limits to a particular sphere of freedom whether we know it or not.

God comes in through a linking of the concept of the ultimatum with the notion of ingredience, with the notion of the way in which a very deep level or structure of being, as for example in science at the most basic physical level you can get to, say the level of quarks or sub-quarks or whatever it is, that level would be ingredient in higher order and emergent levels.

If there is an ultimate, an absolute structure of being then that being would be god. What properties would that being have? That being would have to be a binding being, and that binding could be translated into human metaphorical terms, by *love*.

Love is the binding force of the human world. Let us put it like this: there is a certain sense in which all of us know god and there is a certain sense in which none of us do. Any talk about god is bound to be slightly metaphorical. I do believe that we contain within ourselves infinite potentiality, infinite creativity, infinite power and I do not think it is just our species either. I

think there is an element of the unbounded in us. And I do not think that element of the unbounded is unconstrained, rather I think it is very heavily constrained by our physicality. We can put it like this: we are potentially infinite, within the bounds of our physicality.

The model of the stratification of being always suggests that anything that happens at any one level, whatever level you are looking at, is going to be determined by things at that level, things at higher order levels and things at more basic levels. Our conversation is determined not just by the flow of our exchanges, but by the constraints of philosophical discourse, and the constraints of the physical structure of this building. It is determined by the texts we have read, by our inspirations in nature, by a host of very many, including many intangible things. We must get away from the notion of a flat, one level view of reality.

Chapter Seven

Part I: Reality Check*

Part I: Reality Check

He has developed a whole new school of thought. There is a centre at a major UK university dedicated to the study of this movement. And his works are widely read across many disciplines. So why is it that the name Roy Bhaskar finds its way so infrequently to the syllabuses of philosophy programmes?

In the strictly demarcated world of academia, Bhaskar tends to be lumped with the social theorists, not the philosophers. So just, as John Searle puts it, philosophers inherit a 'dumb list' of standard problems to solve, so philosophy students are given a 'dumb list' of standard thinkers to read. Bhaskar is usually not on that list.

This means that the story of the ascent of Roy Bhaskar and 'critical realism' is an interesting and unusual one.

'When I started out,' recalls Bhaskar, 'people who had been influenced by my work found themselves frequently marginalised

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* Interview for *Philosopher's Magazine*, Autumn 1999.
Chris Norris *asked the questions.* Roy Bhaskar *provided the answers, and* Julian Baggini *interpreted the results.*

in academic life. They had extreme difficulty in getting critical realist papers published, and I found myself acting as a sort of one person support mechanism for people influenced by my work. It was helped a little by the publication of books by Ted Benton, Russell Keat and John Urry, and others—and it began to develop an academic reputation. Nevertheless, there was still a feeling of isolation and fragmentation. Then four of us got together—myself, Ted Benton, Andrew Collier and William Outhwaite—in the early 1980s and we would begin by discussing important theses in philosophy and end up by discussing what was wrong with the state of politics or whatever. Out of that was born the *Realism and Human Sciences* conferences movement. From 1983, we had annual conferences, characterised by friendliness and intellectual stimulation, solidarity and great enjoyment. Not really marked by careerism, position taking, fractious argument, but a real sense of comradeship and an idea of the exploration of truth.

These conferences gradually grew bigger and bigger, and critical realism began to take off in the different disciplines—in sociology, economics, biology, even in physics—and it tools off in the States, in European countries and all over the world. There were journals, like *Radical Philosophy*, which were sympathetic to critical realism, that published articles more easily by critical realists. And then around 1995, we decided to begin to formulate a Centre for Critical Realism which was instituted as a registered charity in 1997–98. We have our own website and about 3,000 people have subscribed to the Bhaskar list on the internet.'

The story is not just of historical interest. It points to the essentially inter-disciplinary nature of critical realism and its attempt to transcend the artificial borders set up between academic disciplines. It also, claims Bhaskar, reveals a deeper truth about what critical realism stands for.

'I think critical realists are understanding the importance of networking and mutual solidarity. It is still a very radical and somewhat fragmented movement. And I would argue that there are profound reasons for this, because the nature of any society dominated by instrumental reason—by reification, by alienation, by master–slave relations—the categorial structure of such a society will be irrealist in character. Irrealism, of one sort another, will

always have the backing, as it were, of the superficial currency of social reality. So critical realists will always be at odds with what appears to be the case in society. So we are marginalised now, by the nature of social reality itself, but despite that we are forming a resistance movement to that categorial structure, in tune and in keeping with deeper categorial structures, which irrealist categorial structures mask, obscure and occlude.'

So what exactly is critical realism? As a theory, critical realism has commitments both to what is (ontology) and what can be known (epistemology). The ontological dimension is the more straightforward. Bhaskar's appears to take a fairly straightforward realist line here. So, for example, he says 'How can we make sense of making a cup of coffee with sugar, except by the notion that the sugar has an independent intransitive existence with respect to our acts of finding it? How can I make sense of my discourse with you, unless I assume that what you say has a sense and intelligibility independent of my understanding of it?'

Rather like John Searle, he makes use of what can be termed a transcendental argument. That is to say, he argues from a starting point we must all accept in order to make sense of experience at all and shows that this requires a commitment to the existence of an independently existing reality.

Bhaskar develops this point by insisting that science requires a commitment to the belief that knowledge increases as we dig deeper into more and more fundamental strata of reality.

I think Marx somewhere observed that the whole of science would be pointless unless there was a possibility of a distinction between essence and appearance—unless there was the possibility that what we thought about natural reality or any other form of reality was wrong.

Therefore, this notion of stratification is already necessary to sustain the idea of critique. The critique of some kinds of understanding or reflection—or the nature of a level of reality, including social reality—in terms of its mis-description of a more basic, deeper or autonomous level of reality. That is essential for the notion of critique or argumentation generally.

Bhaskar neatly sums this up when he says, 'The sort of ontology I was arguing for was the kind of ontology in which the

world was seen as structured, differentiated and changing. And science was seen as a process in motion attempting to capture ever deeper and more basic strata of a reality at any moment of time unknown to us and perhaps not even empirically manifest.'

So far, so pretty orthodox realism. But what of the critical aspect? This is where Bhaskar's thought takes an innovative turn. Bhaskar explains.

'Through and through critical realism has been critical of what we can call the nature of reality itself. Not the nature of absolute reality, or the absolute structure of being—to be critical of that is to put oneself into the position of god or the creator of the universe—but rather it is to be critical of the nature of actual, currently existing, social reality, or of our understanding of social and natural reality. Critical realism has always taken epistemologies, philosophical theses, etc., as reflections of the society in which they are generated and sustained. And as far as these theses are misleading, they point to deep categorial confusions and errors inherent in the very structure of social reality itself.'

Bhaskar's critical realism is therefore an unusual hybrid of commitments both to the ineluctable reality of the external world and a relativistic attitude to our thinking about it. The result is realism, but with an edge. Traditionally, to insist that scientific knowledge is a cultural product went hand in hand with anti-realism. Bhaskar breaks this link.

'There is no conflict between seeing our scientific views as being about objectively given real worlds, and understanding our beliefs about them as subject to all kinds of historical and other determinations. At the same time, there will always be a right or wrong of the matter in anyone discursive domain, which defines the possibility of judgmental rationalism in the normative aspect of science.'

All this, of course, is to simplify matters somewhat. One can get a fuller flavour of the subtlety of Bhaskar's position by considering this detailed account he gives of the relationship between truth and reality.

I argue that truth has four aspects. First, fiduciary—this is, if you like, the intrinsic aspect of science or knowledge—and to say that something is true is to say 'trust me, act on it'. It is quite

obvious that we have to have a workable notion of truth to enable us to get around in a world we have only a limited grasp of. This is a pragmatic necessity. The more strongly this aspect can be backed by other aspects, the stronger it is.

The second aspect is truth as warrantedly assertable. This is truth as epistemological. There is no way of getting around the notion of best possible grounds for acting one way rather than another, in a world in which we must act one way rather than another.

Moving now to the notion that lies behind the first two notions, the idea of truth as absolute. To say something is true is to say this is the way reality is. This is absolutely indispensable for any notion of intentional action and hence for any notion we as human beings can have. For intentionality presupposes two things, firstly a belief, and secondly, an orientation to act on the belief in some manner. Without beliefs human beings just aren't humans. So commitment to beliefs as expressive of reality are transcendental features of any form of social life.

Now, what lies behind the truth of a well attested scientific or moral proposition—e.g., the fact that emeralds reflect light of a certain wavelength—is a higher order proposition, the truth of that truth—the reality that generates it, that is, the atomic structure of the crystal, the nature of the wavelength of light that is reflected in a certain way. What makes it true, for example, to say that if Socrates is a man, he must die, is that it is the nature of human beings to be mortal. It is a proposition at a higher level, and it is this higher level truth that grounds the truth of the universal generalisation, the proposition which is expressed in the absolute conception of truth.

So truth at this higher level just is reality, and it is the reality that grounds or accounts for the mundane realities that we involve in the absolute conception of truth, and it is that absolute conception of truth that backs our epistemological or social conception of truth. There is no getting away from ontology.

The only solution to all the forms of scepticism that the whole tradition of empiricist epistemology has generated, which encompasses the anti-realism to which you, Norris, refer, is to see that what we're trying to do in science or morality or any other

form of life, is to make fallible claims about the world, claims which, if they are true, are true in virtue of the real nature of beings, entities, things—the real nature of the universe quite independently of our claims about it.

It is the real nature of being that grounds well attested, universal empirical generalisations or other propositionalised claims of reality, without which no science, no discourse, no action, or no intentionality is possible. There is no escape from truth.

Critical realism also has a political dimension. For Bhaskar, issues of truth and ontology are inextricably linked to questions of domination and freedom. 'The critical impulse in science,' he explains, 'is one of demystification and the central norm with which I have been concerned recently is that of human freedom.' Human freedom depends upon understanding the truth about reality and acting towards it, so it is essential that science and philosophy should be concerned with human liberation.

This takes us into the realm of ethical issues in scientific research. Because we are very far from perfect or free, by which I mean we are far from the full realisation of our potentials, and because we are dominated by a capitalist society in which reification, alienation, dualism, illusion, categorical error are dominant and manifesting themselves in modalities of instrumental reason and a whole complex of master–slave relationships, there must be necessary constraints on generating anything that goes by the empirical frame of science. So people have recently, quite rightly, become worried about the abuses of science involved in genetic engineering research. We have very good reason to believe that many increases in scientific understanding will actually be abhorrent.

This raises the important question that we cannot prosecute science in an intellectual or moral vacuum. It may be necessary for morality to correct bad science, but it corrects it in the name of a higher norm, true freedom. And that is guided by the highest norm of all—fundamental truth.

Such a view does not sit happily with the 'third way' politics currently dominant in western, left-leaning politics, as is shown when Bhaskar is asked about critical realism's relation to broader political and socio-cultural developments.

I think this has to be understood in the context in which capitalism has basically won the struggle against actually existing socialism as it was called, and 1989 was indeed a crucial year, in that it marked the decisive victory against Soviet-style socialism. New Labour is just part of the universal accommodation to this fact. Capitalism itself is wreaking havoc on our environment, and quite frankly, unless capitalism is overturned, by a revolution—which will be at once much more peaceful and deeper than the one that overthrew socialism, that will draw on resources and aspects of our being that are at once spiritual and cultural, and set in the context of a programme of feasible transition, done in a non-violent way—unless capitalism is overturned in this way, I can see very little prospect of humanity surviving much into the twenty-first century on this planet.

Such pessimistic thoughts are very much on Bhaskar's mind as he writes his latest book. 'I'm currently working on an exploration of the way in which we can draw on the resources of traditions and worldviews other than those of the west—a book called *East and West*. It has a theoretical component and a component which is more popular—it actually takes the form of a novel.

This is very connected to an earlier answer I gave, for if we are to have the cultural and spiritual resources that we need to generate a true alternative to and a true sublation of the tradition that has given us capitalism, etc. we must draw on the traditions of the east as well as those of the west.

This is linked up to my other feeling that not only has western philosophy drawn on far too restricted traditions, but it has also couched itself in a pretty inaccessible mode. I'm aware of the paradox that I have talked about, human emancipation, but in a relatively inaccessible form! So I'm writing a story, which I hope will be universally accessible, and this will be backed up by theoretical works.'

Evidently, Bhaskar has a lot more to say. But will philosophers be listening?

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Part II: Critical Realism and the Left*

Part II: Critical Realism and the Left

David Castle

What is the importance of critical realism for radical politics?

Roy

Critical realism is not designed to support the interests of any particular political tendency or faction. It is oriented to the pursuit of truth and understanding. However, through critical realism positive values are generated by rational argument which show that capitalism is evil and immoral. We can demonstrate that there is a need for a society which satisfies the fundamental tenets of the Martian and socialist traditions.

David Castle

What has critical realism got to offer over the dominant intellectual movements of today, such as postmodernism?

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* Interview with David Castle for *Red Pepper* Magazine, 26 June 1997.

Roy

Critical realism is distinctive from other schools of thought in its concern with ontology or being. This has been continually repressed in recent philosophy. Since Hume and Kant it has been a dogma that in Wittgenstein's words you can only talk about the network that describes reality and not about reality itself. This disables the critical or radical potential of the philosopher's work. It is very important for academics to get free of the delusion that all there is discourse, a delusion which has become common in the social sciences as the scientists have become influenced by post-modernism. Unless one retains notions of reference to an external reality, like nature or the physiology of one's body or the structures of oppression of which we may be unaware, then you have no critical purchase on the discourse. Without a concept of reality the philosopher cannot situate his or her own work. We must remember that philosophy is in society and society is in the natural world, and therefore philosophy is integral to a whole network of forces which it helps produce and is itself partly produced out of. Academics should relate to the social and political movements and structures that exist relatively independently of them but which are affected by them. These movements and structures are increasingly being englobed by a hegemonic capitalism, and unless one can relate to this one is unable to criticise it. It is very easy for postmodernists to get involved in an epistemic retreat in which the world is finally swallowed by the sentence in which you are currently speaking. If no discourse has any concrete referent, then by extension any discourse is as good as another. It ultimately comes down to an absolute relativism in which it is a matter of taste or choice as to what discourse is best.

If postmodernism has a conception of reality at all, it is just as a surface, a flat surface. I think that it is very important to have some conception of the stratification of reality so you can isolate the difference between what I call the real and the actual, or in other words between underlying structures and events. Then you need to assess the relative importance of different underlying structures. Postmodernists claim that this evaluation is impossible. However, while refusing to evaluate elements into a hierarchy, postmodernism lets in some hierarchy through the back door

which it then never questions. In postmodernism, language is emphasised at the expense of everything else—economic structures, political structures and other ideological structures which are linguistically mediated but not reducible to language.

David Castle

How does centralising ontology help us move to a critical stance towards reality?

Roy

The critical realist's commitment to ontology is shown in how she or he understands the component categories of the natural or social world. Categories are typically viewed as things that we impose on reality. The critical realist instead sees categories as constitutive of reality itself. Causality is not something we impose on reality. Causality exists, just as substance, space and time are also constitutive of reality itself. However, given that the constitution of the social world is dependent on concepts, we open up the possibility that the social world may be falsely categorised. It can be composed of real categories which genuinely construct our social world, but which are still untrue to underlying structures, or which conceal other truths of our existence. It was part of Marx's critique of capitalism that the functioning of capitalism turned on a series of category mistakes such as the confusion between exchange value and use value, between labour and labour power. These were the mechanisms which hid the generation of profit in the capitalist mode of production. However, these category mistakes were nevertheless real. Money is a false category, but it is very real—we cannot just choose to ignore it. Instead, we can engage in a process of ideology critique—exposing false categories as false and revealing what they conceal—in alliance with all those forces which have been victims of these structures.

David Castle

You said that critical realism does not support any particular political agenda. However, in its critique of current structures it seems to look to a resolution of political problems through a society

that is more true to itself, more transparent and more fulfilling. Furthermore, you seem to anticipate this in a form of society that we might loosely call 'communist'. On what basis do you argue for this?

Roy

We should be striving towards a society that is both ontologically simple and ontologically honest. The evils of capitalism—class society, instrumental rationality and the logic of exchange value—are produced through its own contradictions. It is ontologically extravagant. An ontologically simple society would be a society in which people lived in harmony with each other, similar to how Marx imagined primitive communism, although societies of the future will be much more complex and differentiated than this.

The production of an ontologically coherent society requires the universal and harmonious satisfaction of human needs which is no less than striving for universal human emancipation. The chief heiress in the last two centuries of this aspiration had been the socialist tradition. That does not mean that socialist politics have always been right or actually emancipatory, it is just that the programme has been oriented towards universal human emancipation. We have to be very critical of the practice of socialist parties both in the old Soviet Union and in the west. Critical realists may not even subscribe to socialism, they may reject the name or the concept and identify with deep ecology or with feminism or something else. There are disputes within critical realism over whether it entails socialism, which turns on the question of what went wrong with socialist analysis, and how deep these problems are, during the whole history of socialism following from Marx.

David Castle

Many people would see your defence of a society based on the principles of primitive communism as hopeless idealism. There is a widespread conception of human needs and desires as naturally antagonistic, that we will always strive for power over others. We can see this in the popularisation of notions of Darwin's (the survival of the fittest as a natural and inevitable process) or even

Hobbes (where social relations are provisional self-motivated contracts between naturally competitive agents). More recently, of course, Thatcher argued that society as an entity does not exist at all, and that the only meaningful social relation are close personal ones, specifically those of the family.

Roy

To take the example of Thatcher, her view that society doesn't exist, that only individuals and their families exist, is absurd. If you look at the actual practices of Thatcherism then you can see that in fact it built up a strong state and a very strong foreign policy on the basis of a strong government. It was infused with nationalism and it was oriented to the supremacy of monetary structures to make the British economy part of global international capitalism under the dominance of finance capital. This had very little to do with individuals and their families and everything to do with structures that are larger than them. In fact, Thatcherism is a very good example of how capitalism rests on contradictions. Thatcherism produced itself out of a rhetoric of libertarian individual freedom and conservative family values but in fact it undermined both of these through its strict monetarism. It was an ontology full of inconsistency and it ended up being unable to sustain its own existence. It failed the supreme criteria in philosophy: reflexivity. Thatcherism was unable to sustain the intelligibility of its own activities: there was a gulf between theory and practice.

To answer specifically your question concerning the antagonism of needs, I think capitalism generates the illusion that needs are unlimited for all commodities, that we have unlimited wants and desires. This is untrue; we have finite needs. We can be at a dinner table and readily say: 'I've had enough, there is more food than I need to eat'. Indeed, this is the case in the world today. The world is capable of producing more food than we need. To take another example, the set of people who need more than one car is very limited. And indeed, in our daily lives we see that we do in fact have a conception of limited needs: if there were six people around the table and there were only five apples, we know how

to resolve the problem. It would not lead to a war of all against all. This misconception of the unsociability of needs is a product of capitalism. It is class structure that has generated poverty. And this is a problem for capitalism, it is not a problem for human beings. The problem for human beings is to overthrow capitalism. If we could tear away this veil of illusion full of logical contradictions and inconsistencies, that is nonetheless still real and oppressive, then we could arrive at a satisfactory resolution of this perceived problem of needs. We would have a society in which we would all be free to develop our powers and opportunities and possibilities and satisfy our needs in harmony with each other and with nature in a sustainable way.

David Castle

I would like to pin you down a bit on the nature of these underlying structures which point us towards communism. Do you follow the traditional Marxist line and believe that behind the illusions of false consciousness the major determining social forces are economic?

Roy

It is not an article of faith that the economic is dominant. Rather, it is an expression of the reality of the world in which we live where capitalist interests and powers are hegemonic. Increasingly, they are by far the most important force governing the structuring of society as it is now, and as it evolves in the future. For the first time we have something like a total world system, which is the capitalist system with the dominant mechanism of finance capital. I think it is no accident that the first thing the Labour government did on arriving in office was to give up control of the Bank of England. That was a recognition that the national economy and the nation state were subservient to finance capital. Therefore economics, in so far as it is the study of capitalism, must move to the fore in our understanding of social reality. Socialists want this to be different. They do not want economic forces and motives and structures to be the dominant ones. They want the free choice of individuals in assemblies working co-operatively to take the

future of the societies in which they live into their own hands and to really decide what goes on. Under those conditions, economics would not be the dominant science.

However, even now, economics is not the only structure which produces society as it is today. For example, the media are increasingly important, and have displaced the sites of other objects which themselves were a force in our social reality. If you turn on the television in Cyprus you get the same programme as you would in South Africa or in India or Australia or in the USA. But of course people can intervene and transform these structures rather than constantly reproducing them, though their vision in doing so will always be limited by how they see themselves as having been formed by very structures under which they live.

David Castle

You have been very critical of postmodernism as a politically disabling set of theories. However, many postmodern arguments have appeared from people on the Left attacking the traditional Marxist model which centralises economics and class. They have asserted the importance of other forces in the workings of oppression—especially gender, ethnicity and sexuality How do you answer these arguments?

Roy

The postmodern assertion of the politics of identity and difference is in fact very useful. It objects to the homogenising and commandist structures of traditional socialist politics, which are still with us in the new model Labour Party and in the opposition variants to it. It is not good enough to treat all oppressed people as if they were uniform members, male members, of the working class. They are all subject to a multiplicity of structures, and they are at the intersection of a multiplicity of sites of power. By treating everyone as equivalent and interchangeable one is aping the instrumental rationality that was generated by capitalism. Just as the law of exchange value doesn't differentiate between the five pounds spent on this tape recorder, or the five pounds spent on a bottle of whisky, or the five pounds spent on necessary food, so traditional socialism hasn't differentiated between one worker who

works for Ford, a male industrial proletarian with a high degree of class consciousness who is a trade union member and is bound into his local community, and a Bangladeshi woman worker in Spitalfields who is not unionised, is frightened, maybe pregnant, perhaps an illegal immigrant, who has got an entirely different consciousness. Neither would recognise each other. This is what the post-modernists stress, and that is the truth.

However, I differ with postmodernists in seeing that the lesson to be learnt is not of ceasing to think in terms of universal structures—the common oppression of a group, the common interests of a group. These two workers are both products of the same system; they have a real identity of interest in overthrowing that system. Rather, we have to refine our conceptions of universal structures. You cannot bring them together by asserting the primacy of a traditional model of class over the real interests and feelings and needs of that Bangladeshi woman. You have got to do it by appealing to the commonality of their enemies and then the particularity of their own interests and differences. You have to understand universals as dialectical rather than abstract. To be specific this means that a universal is not a uniformity. To take a different example from natural science, we are sitting in this room but we are not collapsing to the ground; the law of gravity is operating on us, but only as a tendency. Physical laws are universally applicable, but they are underlying structures, which only in particular circumstances manifest themselves as actualities.

We have to think on four different levels. The first moment is this universal moment—which we share with every other human being. As capitalism becomes increasingly hegemonic, this universal moment becomes defined by our relationship to capitalism, our common oppression by capitalist modes of dominance or of reasoning. This is then qualified by the specific mediations that are particular to us as students or teachers or men or women; of being a certain ethnicity, a certain gender, etc. And then there are our own particular world-lines, our geo-historical rhythmics as I call them: the particular history of England as distinct from that of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. And finally there is our concrete singularity, our individuality as a completely unique human being. When Marx said that the free development of each

is the condition of the free development of all, he highlighted the singularity of the individual: you can't have universal emancipation unless each singular human being is emancipated.

To return to our Bangladeshi worker, as someone employed by a capitalist firm she has something in common with all other workers: this is the concrete universal. In addition to this, there are specific mediations for her as an exploited woman worker and immigrant worker, perhaps providing casualised and especially cheap labour. Then there are the geo-historical rhythmics: Bangladesh is a country where land is on average only four feet above sea level and if global pollution carries on at the present rate then in ten or fifteen years it could be underwater. What does this mean for her consciousness? And in terms of her concrete singularity, her mother may have just died, or her child may have just died, which will produce an additional sense of hopelessness and alienation. All of that must be accommodated by our model of class.

David Castle

It seems that you are seeing the power struggles along the lines of gender and ethnicity as complexifying the dominant model of class struggle rather than representing fundamentally different sites of oppression.

Roy

I do give a primacy to class. Postmodernists do not. For example, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* argue for a radical democratic politics which sees a complex political field where no particular struggle can claim dominance. I would like to have both this moment of complexity but also the moment of dominance found in the traditional socialist analysis of class. Indeed, because it is not related to a primary structure the concept of hegemony no longer makes sense in the hands of Laclau and Mouffe. As Lenin and Gramsci used the concept before them it depended on the existence of one struggle being more important than the others, which would play a strategically crucial role. With Laclau and Mouffe it just merges into a general politics of identity and difference.

This is not to say that oppression always takes the form of class. Class is just one manifestation of the broader category of master–slave relationships. For example, you could say that women are often treated as the slaves of men. We are all victims of a number of master–slave relationships. Although capitalism is the dominant structure, the agency will be universal. In so far as we are looking to transform all of society, we cannot base this on a common identity; a common class consciousness. Though awareness of capitalism must be universal, we cannot expect either an immediate identification between individual agents and class position, however defined; or that those agents who satisfy the objective criteria for being workers will relate to, i.e. subjectivity identify with that description. We have to distinguish between the concept of the working class from what people like to call themselves. And we cannot go around telling every worker in America that they are working class if they actually believe they are middle class. We have to adapt our words without losing the validity of the concepts. And that may also apply eventually to socialism. Socialism may become so discredited that we have to drop the word but keep the idea and the ideals.

If we can show people in the world that capitalism is a destructive a-rid evil force, which is, destroying the planet, which is unnecessary and increasingly unwanted, and which generates social ills, then people will come together as people, as human beings, to transcend that mode of production. They may not realise they are doing it as workers, because of all the ideology which has obscured that notion. This class consciousness will in fact be a universal consciousness. The equivalents of the revolutionary socialists of tomorrow will think in terms of the crisis of humanity and the crisis of the planet, but they will be overthrowing capitalism for those reasons. So the goal is still the same; the terminology and the mechanisms may be different.

David Castle

You have talked of this 'veil of illusion' produced by capitalism which inhibits people's understanding of reality, and which when taken away would allow people to recognise the desirability and possibility of a truly socialist society. How can this veil of illusion

be removed? As analysts and explicators of reality, what relationship should critical realists, and intellectuals more generally, have to society as a whole in relation to this matter? Is it enough merely to announce the true state of things and expect people to change their ways of thinking and being accordingly?

Roy

You can't just produce a grand plan for a new kind of society and expect people to jump on board. You have to work from people's current state of consciousness and approach their problems as they see them: they've got plumbing problems in their homes, or they need ail operation and they can't get into the hospital, students can't get grants or their grants are too low. You then tie in these problems and needs with the structures of capitalism and other forms of oppression that dominate them: globalised capitalism, false consciousness, false forms of mediation or stupefying forms of mediation, the ideology of people's unlimited needs. And you make them see the connections between the problems they have in their own lives and the problems that other people have in their lives, so you can bring them together in a coherent joint programme.

However, you do still need a concrete vision of where to go forward, which I call concrete utopianism, the socialist humanist vision of a beautiful social order to replace the antagonisms and the selfish modes characteristic of capitalism. The oppositionist movements of the 60s and 70s which I was associated with thought you could overthrow capitalism merely by mobilising social hatred. This might create a revolution but what would you put in its place? The end has to be prefigured in the means and this requires an ethical change. If you want to produce a society which is based on love and co-operation, then you have to fight for that structure through loving and co-operative relationships. Otherwise there will be an inconsistency between theory and practice, making the new structure inherently unstable.

We can see pockets of concrete utopianism now. Through the LETS scheme people are realising that there can be societies without money. Movements like 'Reclaiming the night' for women shows how we can imagine a society in which we can protect

ourselves without armies or police forces (or at least without the oppressive features of these). And you can see how concrete utopianism has played a part in social changes that have worked miraculously. One example is contemporary South Africa. Mandela schooled himself in a different kind of politics while he was imprisoned. He was able to come out as a saintly leader unifying apparently irreconcilable forces and transcending the politics of hate.

We need an end to 'the politics of disenchantment', the politics of Nietzsche and Weber and the politics of social democracy, and which has so profoundly influenced the politics of the Left. We need to produce a different conception of ourselves in the world. The revolution will be nothing less than this: the transformation of our understanding of ourselves and of the whole world in which we live, our situation in the cosmos.

Part Three

En Route from Transcendental Dialectical Critical Realism to the Philosophy of MetaReality

Chapter Eight

Critical Realism, Postmodernism and the Global Crisis*

I will be talking about critical realism, postmodernism and the global crisis and I will be saying a little bit by way of trying to indicate some kind of resolution to this crisis that I think we all feel we are in, a profound alienation in contemporary society; indeed a threat to the survival of the species on the planet by just introducing some of the themes from my recent book, *From East to West*. But I do want to do justice to the title that you came here for, so for the first part of the talk anyway, I shall be critiquing postmodernism. So what is postmodernism? Postmodernism is a movement of thought which is very widespread throughout the world, including India as you know. It is very fashionable, and there are some things about it with which I agree and some things about it which I think are profoundly mistaken but have to be understood and explained in the context of criticising it. So I will list ten general characteristics of postmodernism so we can know roughly what we are talking about.

1. An emphasis on difference, relativity and pluralism.
2. An accentuation on the emphasis of language characteristic to twentieth century philosophy.

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* Philadelphia, September 2000 and Pune, December 2000.

3. Scepticism about or denial of the need to say anything about the world.
4. The impossibility of giving better or worse grounds for a belief, action (including speech action) or practice.
5. Life is viewed as a pastiche, not a totality; an assemblage not a whole.
6. The failure to universalise or come to terms with such phenomena as global (let alone cosmic) interconnectedness including the phenomena of globalisation (including the globalisation of postmodernism).
7. The incapacity to sustain an account of change as rational; and hence to topicalise the phenomenon of (individual; collective; global) self-emancipation.
8. Heightened reflexivity, without however a clear conception of self—hence no self-reflexivity or capacity to situate itself.
9. The genesis of a politics or more generally culture, of identity and difference thematising the specificity of particular group interests, and indeed individual ones too, without however sustaining the idea of the essential unity of all human (or more generally just all) beings—that is difference and identity without unity and universality.
10. The germs of a discourse of such phenomena as emotions, a term suppressed in the mind-body dualism characteristic of philosophy.

Let me briefly elaborate on this list. Firstly, it is committed to a stress on difference, relativity, diversity and change. Emphasis on difference in particular. This involves it in a commitment to what in critical realist terms I have called epistemological relativism and that emphasis I think is wholly salutary; in other words I am entirely in favour of that. The second emphasis of postmodernism is an accentuated emphasis on language as the medium and vehicle of social thought and even life. This linguistic turn, making ourselves more aware of language, is also something which is very important and very good, one of the great achievements of the twentieth century. However, I would not want to argue that language exhausts social reality or social life in the way in which most postmodernists tend to do. So I am a bit

nuanced, critical about the linguistic turn. The third feature of postmodernism is a lack of ontological realism and in this respect I am very hostile. Basically postmodernists do not like making ontological commitments, they do not believe that you can say anything about the real world and certainly nothing about the deep structures of the real world, maybe platitudes is all. So the third feature is ontological irrealism. The fourth feature is something I am equally critical of and that is what I would call judgmental irrationalism. They do not believe at the end of the day that it is possible to give better or worse grounds for one system of beliefs or practices, and I am going to argue that it is very important that you do.

Fifthly, postmodernism is characterised by an emphasis on life being a pastiche, a medley of different themes with no underlying unity and lacking causal and internal relations between those different parts. And I am against that. Sixthly, postmodernism is characterised by a failure to universalise and even an insistence that you cannot universalise, a lack of universalizability. Even the very existence of postmodernism as a global phenomenon, a universal phenomenon, becomes something that is very difficult for postmodernists to situate. Why is it that postmodernism has become globalised? They really do not only react against what I will call analytical universality in my talk but they react against any concept of universality at all. I am going to argue in favour of *dialectical universality* and try and explain postmodernism as in part a reaction against phenomena in society and in thought which are analytically universalisable.

The seventh characteristic of postmodernism links them all in a way together and that is the lack of any adequate notions of truth or objectivity. Science tends to be viewed with a lot of suspicion. And the lack of any clear notions of objectivity and truth means that it becomes very difficult for them to sustain the rationality of change; to give an account of how we can change or progress in a better rather than worse direction. So change is, so to speak, an event or a happening which is described from the outside—from all *external*, so to speak, in the worse sense, 'academic' point of view; not the inside, not from the agent's point of view. But when you think about it, we are all agents, we all

have to act, and we want to know how, and why, we should act one way rather than another. Choice is as real, and as irreducible, a feature of social life as change.

The eighth feature of postmodernism is a heightened reflexivity associated with its concern with issues to do with language, however, this accentuated emphasis is unable to sustain a clear conception of the self, and it is a conception which is performatively contradictory in that postmodernism cannot sustain and situate its own coherence. In this way it falls foul of what I have called the supreme criterion of philosophy, that is the unity of theory and practice. The ninth feature involves commitment to a radically new politics of identity and difference, closely intricated with the rise of the new social movements, which we will come to see as a reaction against the abstract analytical universality characteristic of modernism. However, what happened here was that postmodernism threw out the baby with the bath water: it was unable to sustain *any* conception of unity or universality at all, a particularly worrying feature in our epoch of global crisis, when, at all four planes of social being, our close interconnection has become so obvious. The final feature is the beginning of a discourse of the emotions, for so long the suppressed term in philosophical discourse, a term suppressed between the supposedly male domains of mind and body. That is postmodernism in a nutshell.[1]

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[1] A fuller treatment of postmodernism would of course have to take account of its relationship to, as a specific phase in, the development of the philosophical discourse of modernity, in the way I touch on in chapters 1 and 4 of *Reflections on MetaReality*, and my forthcoming *The Philosophy of MetaReality*, Volume 3: *Re-Enchantment and the Critique of the Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Sage Publications. In terms of the schema that I have developed there, postmodernism is the fourth phase in the development of the philosophical discourse of modernity which was initiated by the revolutionary upsurge around 1968 and is also associated with the rise of new social movements. It has an interesting counterpoint. Whereas postmodernists say 'we are different and there is no way of telling which of us is right or wrong'. The dogmatic fundamentalism that arose around the time of the latest phase of the philosophical discourse of modernity, associated with the collapse of the actually existing socialist societies (in 1989–1991), and the rampant western triumphalism which followed in its wake, says 'yes we are different but I am right and you are wrong'.

So what is critical realism? You probably know roughly but I shall just first list and then briefly comment on five themes or five stages in the development of critical realism.

1. Transcendental realism as a philosophy of science;
2. critical naturalism, a philosophy of social science;
3. the theory of explanatory critique, as a theory of how you can rationally derive evaluative from factual positions;
4. dialectical critical realism, as a theory of dialectic, thematising the characteristic dialectical concepts of negativity, absence and change and totality, holistic causality and internal relationality;
5. transcendental dialectical critical realism, as a theory of the necessary spiritual presuppositions of emancipatory projects in east and west alike.

Critical realism started as a philosophy of science which I call transcendental realism and the great breakthrough of this account of science was that it situated ontology, that is the study of being. It put ontology back on the map and critiqued the idea that you could reduce being to knowledge, which I called the epistemic fallacy. It argued for the irreducibility of being and for an entirely different account of being to that which orthodox philosophy had given. It argued that the world was structured, differentiated and changing, not flat, and uniform and unchanging.

The second moment in the development of social science was what I called critical naturalism. This argued against the dualisms and dichotomies that beset the social sciences and to a large extent continue to do so. For example, between naturalism and anti-naturalism, between positivism and hermeneutics, structure and agency, mind and body, reason and cause, fact and value, theory and practice. And it tried to produce a sublation of these dichotomies in a more coherent totality which could show and sustain, albeit under different descriptions, what was right in what the contending parties stressed about social reality without alienating or splitting off that account of social reality from the moment emphasised by the other.

For example structure and agency were reconciled in what I called the transformational model of social activity which saw

social structures as certainly pre-existing individuals, but as only existing and continuing to exist in virtue of their ongoing intentional activity, which thereby reproduced or transformed them. So social structures defined a level of reality, relatively autonomous of individual activity, but did not exist independently of it. The role played by human beings was in reproducing it or transforming it. So justice was done to both structure and agency, neither were reducible to the other; and in that way a better position was arrived at, which did not, so to speak, take sides in the dispute; but rather undermined the very grounds of the dispute, showing the way forward beyond the dispute. In the same way I argued that mind and body was a nonsensical dualism, that mind had to be seen as embodied and bodies as minded; and the reason and cause duality was equally nonsensical, for reasons in social life functioned as causes and at the same time were causally conditioned and explicable. I will use a lot of these different moments and developments of critical realism as my talk goes on in the critique of postmodernism.

So the third stage in the development of critical realism was that associated with what I call the theory of explanatory critique. This said that the taboo against talking rationally about values was quite wrong, that we could use the findings of science, and more generally factual statements to rationally inform ethical and political positions. Ethics and politics was not a matter of subjective preference, it was something that could be rationally discussed. So now we can see that critical realism in its development, starting with a concern with science, was moving into a concern with questions of ethics and politics and value.

This was carried on in the fourth stage of critical realism, which was the dialectical stage which began to thematise such notions as absence, totality and soon in a more adequate account of the Hegelian dialectic than Hegel himself had given.

The fifth stage, which is the very latest stage which I am currently stretching and transcending, has seen a further deepening or further radicalisation of this concern with human emancipation and is basically arguing that there are certain presuppositions which could be called spiritual, which is not the same as religious; spiritual presuppositions of liberatory projects in east

and west alike—in Marxism, and other western social theory and also in many religious and spiritual traditions. And in my book, *From East to West*, I am trying to show a convergence between eastern and western writers who have been concerned with the project of improving the human condition.

What I will do is just give, as it were, a first level critique of postmodernism and then I will go on to deepen it by situating it in the system of dialectical critical realism as further deepened by the spiritual element. So in this way I will be doing justice not only hopefully to postmodernism but also to the theme of *From East to West*, though I should also say that I am now moving from this concern with taking eastern themes to the west to a standpoint beyond the whole opposition, dichotomy or duality between east and west.[2]

A very simple critique of postmodernism would turn around its failure to sustain ontological realism and judgmental rationalism. What critical realism says is that there is no inconsistency between being an ontological realist, that is believing that there is a real world which consists in structures, generative mechanisms, all sorts of complex things and totalities which exist and act independently of the scientist, which the scientist can come to have knowledge of; there is no inconsistency between that and saying that that knowledge is itself socially produced; it is a geo-historically specific social process, so it is continually in transformation in what I called the epistemological, transitive or social dimension for our understanding of science. Science as a social phenomenon is characterised by relativism, by pluralism, diversity, difference and change—all features which postmodernists quite correctly stress. The third aspect which is compatible and necessitated by both ontological realism and epist emological relativism that critical realism stresses is judgmental rationalism. This involves the idea that, even though science is a social process and that we know views and opinions change

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[2] See my forthcoming *Between East and West* (Volume 2 of *Philosophy of MetaReality*): *Comparative Religion and Spirituality in an Age of Global Crisis*, Sage Publications, 2002. Based on the Radhakrishnan Lectures at the Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata in February and March 2002.

through time, at any one moment of time there will be better or worse grounds for preferring one rather to another theory, so that we can sustain the rationality of our grounds for choice.

Let us think a little bit about ontological realism and what happens when postmodernists deny it. I have had lots of debates over the years with postmodernists[3] and one of the most striking features is that if you ask them, well, are you not talking or claiming to talk about reality, the postmodernist might say, there is no need to talk about reality, we can just talk about our talk or we can talk about knowledge or about different social practices, we do not need to presuppose a reality which is a referent of those social practices. So then you turn to the postmodernist and say well, what is the status of your own talk, what is your talk? Is your talk real, are you saying something real or is it not? If the postmodernist says, yes, of course my talk is real, then that is fine, at least one object in the world, namely the postmodernists' talk or discourse, is real. And that makes it possible subsequently to refer to it in a future discourse. So if the postmodernist discourse is real then that is the thin edge of the wedge, because at least one item is admitted to reality and then you can talk about the causes or context of that social reality which the postmodernist has already admitted. If, on the other hand, the postmodernist says, no it is not real, then his discourse becomes impossible, because it is not a discourse; discourse is something which has a causal effect. If I was to talk to Pauline over there, I would not be able to have a discussion with her unless in some way she was listening to me and I was having all effect on her. So to deny that discourse or talk is real is to make it impossible. Because discourse, any discussion has a causal effect or else it would be impossible or otiose, redundant, absurd. Is everyone happy with this? Well you can see someone over there is happy with it so this shows that my discourse is having a causal effect. The most general criterion of reality is causality, so without admitting that the discourse is real, there is no way you can get into an argument or discussion and there is no reason to do so—you might as well not listen.

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[3] Cf my debate with Ernesto Laclau, *Alethia*, volume 1, number 2, September 1998, and reproduced as Chapter 3 of this volume.

Nevertheless this view that in some way we cannot talk, about reality is very strong and popular among philosophers. It is what I have called the epistemic fallacy. It is very well captured in Wittgenstein's famous saying that you cannot talk about the world you can only talk about the network in terms of which we capture the world. And other people have talked about the prison house of language. This is a bit like Weber's iron cage. There is no escape from it. What actually happens is if you do not talk about what the network presupposes about the world then you are going to tacitly inherit from some other pre-existing system of thought an ontology which you may really disagree with. So, postmodernists not thematising, not coming to terms with ontology, tacitly inherit or imbibe a positivistic ontology. You can find this in Derrida, in Ernesto Laclau, you fund this in places in Foucault. Of course, like all great contributors to social science, they are actually doing or presupposing ontology in their practical investigations, but they deny this in their theory and so they cannot think either the unity of their theory and practice or assess whether they may not be tacitly inheriting some pre-existing ontology.

Let us take an example of this from someone who is not a postmodernist but who is a very vehement opponent of ontology, Habermas. According to one of his variants of critical theory, our understanding of the world is constituted by three knowledge constitutive interests. And his knowledge constitutive interests in prediction and control is actually informed by the Popper–Hempel theory of explanation, according to which to explain an event is to subsume it under a set of universal laws which are conceived as covering laws, which is to conceive them as empirical regularities plus a set of initial conditions. Now that assumption about those universal laws as empirical generalisations presupposes an ontology of the world as flat, undifferentiated and unchanging. So that is tacitly taken into Habermas's account of nature and the world so far as it is subject to our instrumental knowledge. Actually he is very anti-positivist, he wants to say lots of very interesting and liberating things about the social world, but because he has got a flat, positivist ontology of the natural world this will inform the very liberating things he wants to say about our social endeavours.

You can find this time and time again in other writers who are formally critical of positivism but tacitly presuppose a positivist ontology. That is basically what is wrong with the failure to think through and then rationally sustain an ontology—you tacitly presuppose a false ontology which the taboo on ontology disguises or screens. So we also have to ask what is the ideological function of this taboo on ontology that the epistemic ontology screens? It is a view of the world as being uniform. That is something which postmodernists really want to react against. So they are not doing justice to their own intuitions when they tacitly presuppose what they are really fighting against.

So let us go onto judgmental rationalism. What is so important about this? Let us take judgmental irrationalism, the idea that you cannot have better or worse grounds for belief. This was famously articulated by Hume who said there are no better grounds for preferring the destruction of my little finger to the destruction of the world. That is an absurd position. It is absurd in every way because obviously, in any sense the destruction of his little finger is far preferable to the destruction of the world, actually the destruction of the world would include the destruction of his little finger. So it is only a contrast if he is implicitly detotalising and taking himself and his finger out of the world and setting the two apart from one another. Another example from Hume: he said I cannot give grounds for going out of this room by the ground floor rather than the second floor. Of course we can give grounds, we know that by virtue of Newtonian understanding of gravity that heavy objects will fall to the ground. Hume knew this, he was not just following custom or convention in always going out through the ground floor door. He had grounds for doing this, grounds which he denied in his formal philosophical theory. So we have once more performative contradiction, the failure of reflexivity or theory to mesh with practice. In short, judgmental irrationalism is false: we do have reasons for preferring one belief to another.

The function of this taboo on giving rational criteria for one ground or another is just to licence convention. It just means that because we cannot give a ground for one belief rather than another what do we do, we just carry on doing what we have

always done. So again it is very conservative, it perpetuates in a way the status quo. The real question is, is it correct? First of all, why is it important to have rational grounds for a belief or practice? The answer is because we cannot avoid what I have called the axiological imperative, that is we have to act and the action is not determined. We do actually have free will, we do have a choice, however circumscribed it is by structural and other determinations, we have no alternative but to act and we need to know what are better or worse grounds for our action. So not to provide a criterion for those grounds is very serious because it means that anything we do or say becomes more or less arbitrary. Ultimately rational discourse, not just science but progress in social life and choice, on a daily, moment-by-moment basis, becomes impossible.

Let me give you an example from the philosophy of science which was very important for postmodernism. This was the problem of incommensurability. Most people thought that this more or less proved that you could not have rational grounds for judgment in science. What was the problem of incommensurability? This was a problem formulated by philosophers of science like Kuhn and Feyerabend who pointed out that when a new theory superseded a pre-existing theory, often the new theory had a conceptual structure which was so different from the pre-existing theory that there were no meanings shared in common. If there were no meanings shared in common there was no way in which they could be rationally compared, so it was argued. So Newtonian theory and Einsteinian theory are so radically different in their conceptual structures that you cannot translate formally, in terms of the canons of deductive or any other sort of logic, the one into the other. Does this mean we have no grounds for preferring Einsteinian theory to Newtonian theory? Not at all. Because firstly the very formulation of whether and how you prefer Einsteinian to Newtonian physics presupposes that there is something they have in common, and what they have in common is a common world that they seek to describe, albeit in radically different ways. You do not say flat Einsteinian theory is incommensurable with music or with cricket or with chess because no one thinks they belong to the same domain or topic area. In short they do not

have a referent in common. So what the formulation of this problem showed was that actually of course Kuhn and Feyerabend, like everyone else, presupposed that Newton and Einstein were actually trying to describe and explain the same world. That they presupposed a common referent. It is very important when you go into linguistics, the study of language, that you do not just have a concept of the sign as being a signifier and signified. The sign is not just a signifier and a signified or meaning, the sign, being the word either spoken or written, also has a referent. So instead of the semiotic duality which stems from Saussure you have what I would call the semiotic triangle. That is any language, any sign system presupposes three terms as a minimum. It presupposes signifier, signified and referent. What the postmodern theorists do is leave out this question of reference. This is the first response to the problem of incommensurability.

All I have done so far is show that the formulation of the problem presupposes that there is a world in common. How, when the theories are so contrasting in their intrinsic, conceptual structures, can you still say that Einsteinian theory is better than another. Very simply you do it like this. You say that Einsteinian theory can explain under its descriptions everything that Newtonian theory can explain under its descriptions, plus some phenomena that Newtonian theory cannot explain under its descriptions. So there is no need for a comparison of the descriptions. If you have a concept of common referentiality then you can just show, which is actually what happened, that Einsteinian theory can explain some theory in its own way that Newtonian theory could not explain in its way. So it becomes a purely quantitative criterion if you like. Einsteinian theory is describing and explaining a greater set, a greater totality than Newtonian theory could do. Now the real world, the actual world that we know (although it may be very difficult to find more than eight or nine test situations) does actually show the superiority of Einsteinian theory, in those eight or nine situations. So that we have a reason for preferring Einsteinian to Newtonian physics. This then shows how the arguments against ontological realism and judgmental irrationalism can be refuted from a critical realist standpoint.

Now let me go a bit further into the development of critical realism. To do this I will take the system of dialectical critical realism. This has four stadia, four moments, four aspects that I have called:

1M – The first moment of ontology,
2E – The second edge of negativity, dialectic and absence,
3L – The third level of totality, and
4D – The fourth domain or dimension of transitive praxis and reflexivity.

At the first level or moment of ontology, what we have already seen is not only the legitimacy, necessity for ontology but the necessity of the entirely different ontology developed by critical realism. This will be a stratified ontology. What critical realism argues here is that not only is ontology necessary so that you are tacitly presupposing it, but also that a correct or adequate ontology is necessary; so if you have a false ontology in practice, in theory you actually presuppose in your causal efficacy a true ontology in practice. So let me give you an example of this. If you were working with a concept which we could call ideology or false consciousness, of laws as being merely empirical regularities, what happens when you apply laws in the open systems of nature is that you are assuming that they will work whether or not there is an empirical invariance. Empirical invariances only obtain in a laboratory. The law of gravity is actually operating on me now although it is not pulling me to the ground. So it is actually empirically false here. But it is transfactually, really true. The engineer in his practice must presuppose the transfactuality of laws. So the philosophical ideology in terms of which he thinks his practice is contradicted by the reality of that practice which presupposes a correct account of reality. Here we have a complex ideological figure of theory–practice inconsistency which is the way in which a false theory presupposes in practice a truth which it denies. This I called a TINA formation, meaning that there is no alternative, there is no alternative but to the tacit presupposition of truth at some level.

A good example of a TINA formation, which will be familiar to you as social scientists and philosophers, is given by Marx's

critique of political economy. Here he said that agents in the capitalist world think their world in terms of concepts which actually occlude and deny the true nature of capitalist society which those conceptions actually depend on. So when we engage in exchange, buy a commodity, a newspaper or something like that, that actually presupposes according to Marx the whole basis of exploitation of labour, that is the extraction of surplus value via unpaid labour. Which is the hidden secret of capitalism for Marx. So all the structures of the capitalist society depend on this hidden secret—the extraction of surplus value through unpaid labour. But to take it from a completely different context, this is the tacit presupposition by what is false or inadequate of what is true, what is necessary for it, what must be going on anyway. Take an assembly line, what must be going on anyway is that the workers must be free, creative human beings, even though their creativity and freedom may be denied by the structures of capitalist society. Their freedom, creativity and ingenuity are necessary to sustain the production line, to keep it going. Chomsky says this when he talks about our innate capacity as human beings to generate an infinite number of sentences including languages which we will never access. So underneath this, I want to argue in western libertarian thought there is a level in which humanity is free, creative, inventive and I would argue spontaneously loving and compassionate, which is tacitly presupposed, but nevertheless occluded, that is screened, denied and dominated by the false and oppressive structures of the social world we inhabit which are characterised by alienation, misery and ill. To put it in a nutshell, as Rousseau said—this is the summary of the western tradition of libertarian thought—man is born free but is everywhere in chains, in his inner essence he is free, but in his actuality he is in chains. That inner essence is not allowed to manifest, not allowed to express itself in society.

Let us compare that with a Vedic understanding of the world in which most of us live in, a world of *maya*, of illusion. Again we have the sane figure, this world of illusion actually sits on, reposes, would not exist without Brahman or pure spirituality, which it screens and which it dominates in the actuality of our lives. That is to give you an idea of how something from the east also

links in with a figure of thought that we have from the west. What I am beginning to suggest is that what liberatory thought is doing is building up to a view of man as being far greater in his potentiality, his possibilities, his powers, his real essence than anything that is ever actualised in our social world. The project of liberation then becomes to shed those unnecessary and unwanted determinations, all those structures, including the structures inside us, which prevent the realisation of the true essence of humanity as free, creative and loving. For those of you coming from a Left-wing tradition, you can take Marx's ideal of the communist society as one in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all. This does not only express a wonderful dream. For that freedom is a reality in human beings now and what I want to argue is that the actuality of that dream, this heaven on earth, this utopia, the actuality of a level of (incompletely realised) enlightenment is a tacit presupposition for all the misery and ills in the world that we have. The totality of master–slave relationships, or oppressive relationships including the internalised ones, depend on the free creativity of slaves. War is a horrible phenomenon characterised by violence but it is a phenomenon which is impossible without the human virtue of love. Think of what it tacitly presupposes, think, of the selfless solidarity of the soldiers on the front, think of the love and support that sustains them in their struggle, that of their sisters, wives, mothers, daughters, their comrades and friends. This terrible phenomenon war is actually sustained by love. Yet clearly in our society war or hatred or violence or strife dominates love, that on which it depends. So this is the structure of the figure of thought we have here, the suppression by the false of the truth on which it depends and which sustains it.

Let us move on now to the second edge of dialectical critical realism which is the edge or mode or dimension of negativity; absence and most importantly dialectic. I will just say that I think absence is indispensable for any being at all, it is clearly essential for any process or change. Because a process or change is always the absenting of something which was already there and the presenting of something new. The greatest western theorist of dialectic, which turns on absence, was Hegel. Marx famously talked

about the rational kernel in Hegelian dialectic being occluded or shrouded by the mystical shell. He said to Engels, in a rather wistful letter, if only I had a few hours or moments, I would love to say what the rational kernel of Hegelian dialectic was, in a few printers sheets, but of course he had arguably more important things to do. So what I have tried to do in my dialectical works from *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* on is to bring out exactly what the rational kernel is. The rational kernel is actually a general learning process which occurs in society, in science, in art, everywhere. It is a process which is driven by absence. What happens is you have a totality such as a scientific theory which is incomplete in some way. That incompleteness means that something is absent from it. That incompleteness generates inconsistencies and contradictions which pile up to the point at which a crisis occurs which then needs to be resolved by transcendence to a greater totality. This is the characteristic pattern of scientific discovery and growth as described by Kuhn and others. I have redescribed this in realist terms, but the general pattern is there. You have incompleteness generating inconsistency generating resort to a greater totality, that is transcendence to a greater totality in science and social life generally. And the very development of critical realism is itself a process of self-transcendence.

Now within the moment of transcendence there is a transcendent moment itself, because a new theory can never be induced or deduced from the pre-existing data, it is not a mechanical algorithm. True it only develops to a mind or a community which has immanently prepared the ground, but when it happens it comes as a bolt from the blue, out of nothing, *de novo*, it may come in a dream, as in Crick and Watson's discovery of the double helical structure of DNA, in a moment of rest. This gives rise to a second inflection to the term transcendence in which what actually happens is that in a moment of stillness or quiet or something like that we get the breakthrough we are looking for when we are not looking for it, when we let go, do something different or suspend the search—then (and only then) if it is going to happen, it happens. It is a breakthrough that cannot be mechanically or in any other way, algorithmically, deduced. It is the emergence and emergence always means from nowhere, from absence,

through absence of something completely new. Now if you do not accept the idea of *emergence out of absence*, then you cannot have real novelty in social life or anywhere in nature, so it is a very important concept.

I should perhaps just say what the mystical shell is for completion. The mystical shell is Hegel's elimination of absence. This is the way in which at the end of the day, positivity is always restored, so the system ends, as you know, in his political philosophy, which the Left Hegelians saw, correctly, as an apologia for the Prussian state. We have had the theme of the end of history coming up in the west more recently since 1989, after the collapse of what was called the 'actually existing socialist societies', celebrated by Fukuyama in his *The End of History and the Last Man*, which explicitly invokes Hegel. The Left Hegelians already saw that at the end of Hegelian dialectic there was an accommodation to existing reality in its fundamental conceptual structures. But what they did not notice was that accommodation, apologetics, conservatism was already there at the beginning. Because if you look at the *Science of Logic*, it begins with the concept of being and that generates the concept of nothing which immediately passes into the concept of becoming. After that all the concepts of Hegelian dialectic are positive. Whereas what I want to talk about is not just nothing in the sense of indeterminate absence, but *determinate absence*, like the lack of food that drives hunger on, the absence of adequate housing, absence of education, absence of literacy, absence of a fair distribution of income in the world, absence of fair possibilities for people. So you see it is determinate absences which drive the dialectic on in the social process. Without the concept of determinate absence we are not going to see how it is that people, as distinct from abstract conceptual structures, will be moved to real change. I could go on much longer about Hegelian dialectic in another context.

I now move quickly on to the third level of totality. The chief category that critical realism introduces here is absolutely vital for our critical understanding of postmodernism. This is the category of dialectical universalisability. Of course this is not the only category that the third level of totality thematises, nor the only one that is relevant for the critique of postmodernism. For

the realm of totality turns above all on internal relationality, and that opens the way to a consideration of holistic causality, interconnectedness, and all the other phenomena which we see manifest phenomenally in globalisation, and the global crisis which we are currently undergoing at all the four planes of social being.

Postmodernism, in its most fundamental aspect, must be seen as a reaction against the logic of abstract analytical universality, and the alienation and reification that goes with it. I have already argued at the level of 1M of ontology, that laws in the real world are not analytical universals, that they do not describe actualities like constant conjunctions of events, or empirical regularities. Rather they must be understood as tendencies, tendencies which apply in their manifold determinations to explain the complexity and uniqueness of particular events in the open systemic world, that is the world outside experimentally controlled closures. However the real basis to the ideology of laws as empirical invariances or universal covering laws (at the domain of the actual) lies in the capitalist mode of production, which has an incessant logic which takes the form of the continuing reproduction of the same. This is the logic of globalising commodification. We can see it manifest not only in the Humean theory of causal laws but in the Kantian categorial imperative which says that the test of an ethical maxim is whether it applies to every case. Of course we know that there are no maxims like this. There are circumstances under which lying, even killing, is right; nor can these circumstances be generalised from one context or one individual to another. Thus it may be right for me to tell x a white lie in a particular context but not y. Just as the real basis of causal laws lies in the tendencies of underlying structures and mechanisms the real basis of right-action lies in the virtue of an embodied personality which is clear and consistent with its ground-state. The globalising logic of commodification was mimicked in the practices of actually existing socialist parties and the practice of the states of the Soviet bloc. What all these things have in common is the absence of the ideas of differentiation, geo-historical trajectorisation and uniqueness. Thus just as a ten rupee note does not differentiate one commodity from another, so in the practices of socialist parties no attempt was made to differentiate

say one member of the working class (perhaps an immigrant male) from another (perhaps a female agricultural worker). The postmodernist reaction took the form of saying no, we are not just members of the working class, we are not just the same, we are female members of the working class, or we are members of a particular occupation, generation, ethnic minority, sexual orientation or whatever. It was the affirmation of identity and difference which had been eliminated, blanketed out by the abstract universals that resonated with the logic of capitalism.

Critical realism is very sympathetic to the politics of identity and difference. Where it takes exception is in suggesting that what the postmodernists have done is thrown out the baby of unity with the bathwater of abstract universality. So that postmodernists and those influenced by them—and the new social movements—expressed something of the same logic. They find it very difficult to sustain a concept of the unity of the human race, or all species or all beings, in a situation where our interconnectedness has never been more acute and where a sense of our unity as members of the species, let alone as occupants of ground-states within a single cosmos, has been more essential to assert. Quite literally today we stand or fall together. It does not matter whether you are a master or a slave, whether you are an Australian or a Canadian, whether you live in Tokyo or Buenos Aires, we are all bound to the same fate. We can see this at all four planes of social being. This conception of four-planar social being was a generalisation, made at the dialectical stage, of the transformational model of social activity, which we have already seen reconciling structure and agency. What it said was that all social phenomena have to be understood at four levels:

(a) Our material transactions with nature;
(b) our social interactions with others;
(c) social structure;
(d) the stratification of our embodied personalities.

We can see that we are in crisis at all these four levels; and at all four levels we are alienated; and at all four levels we are interconnected, globally. The root of this alienation I would argue lies in our self-alienation, that is our alienation from our ground-states,

or our most fundamental essential nature. If we were not alienated from our most fundamental essential nature we would see immediately our interconnectedness with the essential natures of all other human beings and the rest of the cosmos. Of course the globalising logic of commodification has to be nuanced a little bit. It is not just a simple phenomenon, it itself has to be understood dialectically, as a specific phenomenon in its own right. Thus more tandoori chicken is consumed in England than Kentucky fries in India. So it is not a one-way traffic. That would be to make the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.

What then is the categorial schema in terms of which we have to think and explain events and things, including human beings, social phenomena, etc. The minimum unit for understanding anything that happens in the world is the concrete universal. This has four moments:

First we must understand things in terms of their most fundamental universal nature, say in terms of the transfactuality of the laws which apply to them; **second**, we must understand them at the level of those specific differentiations and mediations—the same laws, interpreted as tendencies, will apply to different things in different ways, depending on their circumstances and all the other factors which differentiate them. **Third**, these universals must always be specified in terms of the geo-historical trajectories of the phenomena to which they apply. So one could have a universal, such as human being, subject to all the same mediations, but coming from very different backgrounds or experiencing very different histories, for instance two school teachers in Pune, one an immigrant from Tamil Nadu, the other a local Maharashtrian, etc. **Fourth**, after we have taken account of all these three moments there will remain an element of ineluctable uniqueness about any phenomena, any way in which the universal manifests itself in the world. This then is the schema of dialectical universality and concrete singularity. There is no phenomenon, nothing, no event in the world which is not concretely singular and there is no law which applies in any other but a dialectically universal way. This then is the schema which we need to do justice to difference and identity while persevering the idea of the unity of

human beings in the context of the global crisis which would engulf us all.

Turning now to the fourth domain of transformative praxis. The first thing we have to realise is the truth of five theorems about human agency. First, intentionality is irreducible, and intentionality presupposes the role of consciousness and ideas. We only need talk about a phenomenon as being a human act, in so far as it is the product of intentional agency, otherwise it is just a happening to a human being, like slipping on a banana skin, or catching a cold. (Of course we know that human beings can do things to encourage or avoid such phenomena, but that only shows that the intentional and material levels are in causal interaction.) The second feature is the irreducibility of agency. We have no choice but to act. Whatever we decide to do, even if we decide to abstain from action, this is still a choice and an action. This implies a critique of traditional so-called spiritual thought, which would seek to withdraw from the world of activity by retreating to the monastery or whatever. This may have been appropriate in the past, but in the age of global crisis we live in, such a position is indefensible. The third feature of a social event is that it must be understood in terms of all four planes of social being that I have just described. The fourth feature is extremely important: this is that whatever we do, at some point, at some level, we must just do it spontaneously. I may wonder how I gun going to cook a meal, and think, will I do it this way or that way, at some point I just have to do it. We could not do anything in the world unless there was a level of basic, spontaneous action, things we just did. This is profoundly important because it means that ultimately all change in the social world proceeds from self-change. Because if everything we do depends upon our spontaneous activity, then to change at any level of practice in our world, means that we have to in some way change ourselves, our ways of doing things. So this points to the primacy of self-change. However, this must not be misunderstood; and this takes me to the fifth theorem. This is that anything we do will immediately affect all planes of social being. So that although I cannot do anything, except ultimately in the last instance by doing it myself, whatever I do, necessarily

myself, I am affecting other beings, other human beings at level (b); I am affecting the natural environment, i.e. (a); and in some way I am engaged in a relationship with the social structure, i.e. (c), reproducing it or more or less transforming it. So we have the phenomenon of the simultaneity of action, necessarily action by an agent, and therefore self-action and social action, and a dialectic of self-change and social change. The only way we can change society is ultimately by our actions, and if they are erroneous or less than optimal, then ultimately we must change ourselves. But any way we change ourselves and any way we act we will be affecting other human beings and the whole social structure. So there is a natural dialectic between the two.

Recently I have argued that the logic of emancipatory projects is such that they presuppose that we are essentially free, good, loving, creative beings—this is the primary or foundational level of our being, and our social being. That level however is masked and dominated by the social forms that we have generated and we reproduce or transform, many of which are internalised within ourselves in the form of our motives or thoughts or fixations which are contrary to our fundamental natures. This is what is meant by saying that we are alienated at all four planes of our social being, unfree at all four levels of our socialised nature. Supposing it does not matter whether you set yourself a purely personal, individual objective in life or you dedicate yourself to a social ideal, such as ridding the planet of global warming or whatever, the only, and ultimately the most effective, way of doing it, is to be totally clear and single-pointed about it. There is however always going to be a problem if what you want is inconsistent with what you essentially are. And if you want to be a millionaire, but this is inconsistent with your ground-state, which is loving and compassionate and thinks that having so much money is not a good use of resources, then you will be in conflict. And to have a split intentionality means that you can never achieve any of your objectives. The one level of intentionality that you cannot avoid, that will always be there, is the level which springs from your most fundamental nature. So ultimately you will be forced on a dialectic, presupposing access to that nature (which I have argued we all have all the time) in which you realise that you

need to eliminate all the unnecessary and unwanted determinations in your embodied personality, all the aspects of heteronomy, to be an effective agent in the world, whether you are setting yourself an individual or a social objective. When you have eliminated these heteronomies, you will become inevitably more clear, and more aware of our interconnectedness, you will become more loving, more creative (or we could put it the other way around, you would be ridding yourself of the blocks on your natural loving, creative nature) and be a more creative agent of social change. And this will inevitably take you to a commitment to the goal of universal self-realisation, or ushering in what I have called a eudaimonistic society, that is a society which corresponds to an ideal which was expressed by Marx in the words that the free development of each would be the condition of the free development of all; that your happiness and flourishing would be just as important to me as my own. And in fact unless we have this ideal, at least in practice, we will never succeed in being free ourselves, because we are so bound up together. We are all aware of this in the case of things like smoking. If someone smokes in the room this affects everyone. But we should be aware of this at a global level now, following events such as those that happened on and issued after 11 September 2001.

Of course without the categories of independent reality, the capacity for rational judgment and choice, the understanding of the world as being punctuated by negativity and a sense of dialectic, the idea of universals and particulars as being subject to the norms of dialectal universality and concrete singularity and an understanding of the dialectic of self-change and social change, embedded in a view of human beings as beings with a ground-state in terms of which they are interconnected with all other beings with their ground-states on what I have called the cosmic envelope, it is very difficult for the postmodernist to cope with our contemporary global crisis. Moreover, it is difficult for him even to understand the phenomena of the globalisation of postmodernism itself. How is it that everyone is affected by and even adopting postmodernist attitudes everywhere. Isn't this a dialectical universal, not just a local belief system. What I am arguing then is that postmodernist man or woman presupposes a

realist man or woman in practice and that the realist man is a man constituted by a dialectic of co-presence, in which an essential, true or alethic man or nature sustains all the heteronomy that is co-present within him; and that that ensemble, that compromise itself sustains the compromises, or what I have called TINA formations, in society at large. At least critical realism can set the agenda, show what we need to understand and overcome our global crisis. This is quite simply the disemergence, the shedding of all the elements of heteronomy in our world today, at all levels of social being. And this practice begins here, right now, with each individual with everything they do.

Chapter Nine

Left versus Right Brain, Creativity and Emancipation*

I suppose the motivation for making this presentation here was that this is a women's university and traditionally the distinction between left and right brain is associated with a distinction between the male and female or men and women. I think that there is something in that definitely, but one should not immediately identify left brain with men and right brain with women. So, I will do this in two parts. I will talk about the characteristics of the left and the right brain and then I will look at how this relates to women's activity, women's labour, women's oppression and women's emancipation in the context of an orientation to universal human emancipation and indeed ultimately universal self-realisation.

Actually I think what you can say is that the left brain reflects certain features, which are very fundamental to our society. I will be very critical of the limits of left-brain thought. In arguing for the right brain I will be arguing for the need to supplement the formal analytical logic associated with the left brain with a number of right-brain characteristics which I will go into in a moment. At the end of the day what I would like to see is these

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* SNDT, Mumbai, December 2001.

two hemispheres integrated and synthesised; so that everyone, men and women alike, should be able to think in both a formal analytical mode, and in a right-brain, creative, practical, intuitive way. In fact both ways are necessary in order to be able to operate computers, information technology, and even spontaneous fluency in language. But even more, both are necessary ultimately to do anything at all.

I do not agree with all the normal characterisations of the differences between left and right brain. I think language actually comes from a point of intersection of the two hemispheres, so that really, although you can do a lot with the right brain alone, and you can do a bit (although not so much) with the left brain alone, language and linguistic fluency, communicative fluency, many of the skills which women possess and perform so well, actually already display the kind of synthesis I am arguing we all have to achieve.[1] And in arguing thus for the compatibility and synthesis of these two kinds of mental functioning, you can say that this is a sort of argument for showing how women can be the leading edge in the struggle for human emancipation. When I say that what I mean is that some aspects of women's activity today are pre-figurative of the kind of features which will be necessary at a universal level in an emancipated society of the future. But you cannot just abstract those features and extrapolate them into an emancipated society. What we have now in the case of women is a kind of punctuated pre-figuration of aspects which must be realised in the future, if indeed the species is to survive. I do not want you to think that I am condoning the context of women's activity today. The struggle for women's emancipation is a vital part and that is why it is a punctuated prefiguration. It has got to be the sense in which women today embody aspects of the society of the future, has to be punctuated by the total abolition of all oppressive relationships or what I call master–slave hierarchies.

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[1] When you do empirical studies you find that often boys at a young age will be better at mathematics and abstract reasoning, but women will almost always be better at communication; this actually flows from the point of integration between the two hemispheres.

Let us look at some of the features of left and right brain. Now what I want to argue is that left brain thought actually mimics and chimes in with the philosophical discourse of modernity. It is left-brain thought which is reflected in that discourse and that discourse itself reflects the logic of our society and the globalising imperialistic logic of the capitalist mode of production. We are dealing with a nice synchronicity or set of resonances between left-brain thought, the philosophical discourse of modernity and the logic of the capitalist mode of production. There is one further term I want to add to that, and that is the globalising logic of capitalism itself produces a very crude and materialistic society. And a certain sense of materialism which I am going to define. The radical way I want to move is to show how the body of philosophical thought with which I have been associated, critical realism, actually displays a spiritual element, a level of spirituality which is presupposed by all theories and projects of human emancipation, for example by Marxism—which must actually pay attention to this element of spirituality without which we are not going to have the universal revolution which we need to save the human species on this planet. This seemingly little simple perhaps academic contrast between left and right brain is actually going to be very important.

The first thing I want to do is distinguish this contrast between left aid right brain from some other contrast. From the contrast between the discursive and the intuitive intellect. All these things shade into one another, but that is the second distinction. And the third is the contrast between analytical and dialectical reasoning. We will see why that is important in a moment. The fourth is between sentential and iconic thought. That is thought which thinks in terms of words and thought which thinks in terms of pictures. The fifth is the distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental modes of reasoning. That is between conditional and unconditional or some other mode of reasoning. The sixth feature is the distinction between reasoning and behaviour which displays attitudes of attachment, of possessiveness, of manipulation and unattached activities and relationships. All these are nuanced differences, so that though they cannot be read one-to-one, there is a clear sort of family resemblance between the

aspects of the left brain and the right brain. The seventh feature is between an ethics which is based on virtues, that is an ethics which is based on the idea of cultivating good human beings, virtuous human beings, who will act rightly from the nature of their hearts. This is an ethics of virtue versus what I will call an ethics of rules. This is an ethics where people behave rightly only because they are told to. Only because they have to conform to a certain set of rule systems. Virtually everything we do in our life is constrained by rules, laws, bureaucratic or financial dictates.

How lovely it would be if we could just all be spontaneously good, and there was no tension between what we wanted to do and what we were being forced to do or what was right. And most of us can feel this tension in every move we make. It is very important philosophically and politically that that tension exists. So the eighth formal proposition that I want to bring out is the distinction between dualistic and non-dualistic modes of thought and activity. The left brain is typically dualistic, is typically oppositional and thinks in terms of binary oppositions whereas the right brain is non-dualistic, synthetic, holistic and it is convergent. It is concrete in a way which the left brain is abstract. Let us discuss a bit more some of the features of the left and right brain and then we will look at how important these distinctions are.

The first thing is that the left brain is sequential. Only one thing, you can only do one thing, think one thing at a time. It is a whole sequence of binary oppositions or choices. Yes or no. There is no fuzziness. Then it is a process which is carried out entirely in thought. It is a symbolic process carried out entirely in thought. What does this mean? It means verbal thought, the right brain is non-verbal which is why I have said the faculty of language, and in many cases, what women are doing, or spontaneously do or are forced to do by the nature of the society in which they were placed is to synthesise these two aspects, these two kinds of mental functioning. So the right brain is non-verbal. The right brain is imaginative, visualising, picturing. Actually language involves the synthesis and in some way the transcendence of the opposition between these two brains. Ultimately we need all of us to understand and fully utilise the powers of both aspects of our brain, that is both brains or both hemispheres of the brain;

they are not even to be thought of as two horses, two stallions which should pull in the same way so that they should not be opposed to each other, rather, they have to in some way be transcended. What I am going to argue for is that actually we do spontaneously in our daily life transcend the oppositions of left and right brain at a level which I am going to call the supramental level of consciousness.

The new concepts that I am going to introduce really are those of the levels of the *ground-state*, which is our innermost being, the *cosmic envelope* which relates us to everything else in the whole cosmos and in particular the notion of *transcendence* and *transcendental identification*. This is where, if you like, the overlap with spirituality comes in. And I am going to put, if you like, the basic features of what the new synthesis or new transcending philosophical position should be and then articulate it in relation to those polarities and those aspects of left-brain thought, the philosophical discourse of modernity and the globalising logic, particularly of the capitalist mode of production. Let us then talk about transcendence. Because I was talking a moment ago about the way in which in language we do not only synthesise but in some magical way we transcend the opposition between the verbal and the non-verbal. We transcend it verbally, but when we are fluent we can communicate in a non-verbal way as well as a verbal way. We have the expression 'body language'. We can intuitively feel or read someone's face. This concept of transcendence I would like to make the key concept in my talk today.

Let us look at a few senses of transcendence. For one sense in which one thing can be said to transcend another is just a simple sense in which it surpasses or over-reaches another. Particularly in science we have a completely non-spiritual, or you could call it a-spiritual, concept of transcendence in which we talk about one theory transcending or overcoming the splits or oppositions within another in a way in which Einsteinian theory overcame aporia or contradictions within Newtonian theory. And that is very familiar to people who look at science as a process. Because characteristically what happens in science is that any particular theory that you formulate will have some kind of weakness; this weakness will be an absence, some sort of incompleteness in its depiction,

characterisation of reality. This absence, either a level of depth or a reach of totality that the theory has not included within its existing structures, will eventually get to a point where it generates contradictions and crises. This is well known from Kuhn. This is the period of revolutionary crisis. But at some point someone will come up with a theory which transcends both the contradictions and the old theory. So that is the relative sense of transcendence. Now this transcendence also will include the synthesis of what was best in the old theory, but under the new descriptions—so generally the world will be re-described but the truth that was contained will be preserved.

Now moving on to the absolute concept of transcendence we can ask where this new theory comes from which is the moment at which positive contraries generating the contradiction are transformed into negative sub-contraries, that is consistent descriptions of the world. This moment is a moment that cannot be achieved by induction or deduction, or by any procedure known to formal logic. So it has to come from the unknown, from absence, out of the blue, from nowhere—it is an emergent, real, novel feature. Let us see how emergence out of the blue happens in science. The first thing to note is that it does not happen to just anyone. It happens always as the irruption of a transcendent cause onto immanently well prepared ground. Thus, who had the brilliant idea of gravity? just that scientist who was most thoroughly immersed in the subject matter. So this moment of creative imagination that Newton had when he discovered gravity is the first concept of transcendence, particularly associated with creativity—it is really emergence from nowhere. Again I am not saying it is ontologically nowhere, it comes out of the blue. And we can go a bit later to ask whether there is a sense in which we can actually say anything about where it comes from, because surely something cannot come from absolutely nothing, but we will leave that as a puzzle for the moment. That is the first concept of transcendence, as the emergence from nowhere that is necessary for any novelty or change.

The second, and now we are on more familiar ground, is the sense in which you become one. Transcendental identification: you become one with something else which you know, or

of which you had no uncertain descriptions. This is a different concept of transcendence. And this is transcendence as transcendental identification. What is important here is to realise that most thinkers in the spiritual traditions of both west and east have only looked at transcendental identification as identification with what is within. Transcendental identification with oneself. One reaches oneself. One reaches a point of non-duality, you are completely one with yourself. For example in meditation or in prayer. But of course we all experience other forms of transcendental identification. I can be absorbed, engulfed in a picture, a walk in a sea, if I listen to music or listen to bird song then I am one with the bird song, I actually become one with the bird song. This is transcendental identification taken out of a spiritual context. You can think for a moment whether you have ever experienced this. This is transcendence *into* something, rather than *onto* you. So actually I can become one with this pencil or one with myself. In the case of becoming one with myself I retreat from the objective world, totally into subjectivity until in a state of what is from the point of view of thought, in emptiness, I am just one with myself, totally to do with myself, and there is nothing outside me. Or I can become one with something external to me. Here what happens is my subjectivity goes completely into an object. The Zen Buddhists, for example, have a tradition in which you have to become one with something which is not particularly nice, or not necessarily beautiful. We all may feel we can become one with a beautiful rug or a beautiful symphony, but becoming one with a corner of the room, this would be a task, or becoming one with this pencil. We might feel that we could become one with a tree, but can you become one with a fence, it is more difficult perhaps you might think. But actually becoming one, transcendental identification is absolutely essential to any form of social life. Because when you hear me and understand me then you become one with an aspect of me. You become one with my speech, with my thought. And unless you became one with each other in your daily life then you could not do anything at all. So this capacity to transcendentally identify with another being is essential to any social life. What I want to argue is that at a cosmological level, its most fundamental form is *love*.

There are two other kinds of transcendence, transcendental identification, total unity with one's context, with no sense of duality. The third sense is transcendental identification with the activity you are doing. This is transcendental identification in non-dual activity. For example, the footballer who is focusing entirely on his movement of kicking the ball, or the cricketer who is focusing entirely on hitting the ball, just like the cook who is focused entirely on what he is doing, or the driver who is focusing entirely on what she is doing, then she is totally at one with her object her context. There is no duality, there is transcendental identification with the activity, this is focused, single-pointed, activity. This is activity which is not split. Any activity which is split, for example by attention to the result or consequence of the activity, or split by being concerned with something else, by not being here and now in the activity, by being somewhere else or some other time, will be dualistic activity. And dualistic activity will always be split because actually it is not clear what you are trying to do. Because if you are not totally here now and you are somewhere else, where is your intentionality? Where are you as a subjectivity if you are not totally here now, but you are partly here now, and partly at lunch, or partly back at home sleeping, or you are thinking only about how this is going to help you achieve better grades in your exam or advance your professional career, or you are thinking, if only I had been focused on what I did yesterday I might have been better at it, even that is to split your intention. This is the nub of Krishna's advice to Arjuna when he said do not think about the results, the consequences, just be focused on the activity. And the whole Vedic critique of attachment and the Buddhist critique of craving, the critique of desire or its inverse form, fear, the critique of attachment as attraction and attachment as repulsion is really based on a critique of activity which is dualistically split.

Actually we all know that it is possible to perform non-dualistically split action. How do we know this? Well, if you just thought about doing something and thought about how you were going to do something then you would never do anything. Ultimately you must just do something without thinking of doing it. That is ultimately all action reposes on a level of infrastructure

of basic or spontaneous non-dual action. That is action which you do not do by doing anything else, you just do it. In that moment of non-dual action then you are just totally focused and you do that spontaneously, you just do it. Ultimately all action, any form of life, must depend on non-dual action. You can think about how you are going to make the meal and what ingredients you are going to put in, but ultimately you just have to cook. This is true even of thoughts. If you are thinking about what you are going to think about, at some point you just did not think, you would not be able to think. It is also true of language, of understanding. You may wonder what is he saying, but at some point you just have to stop and just do it. So we are all skilled performers of non-dual action, we are all skilled performers of that form of transcendental identification.

There is a fourth form of transcendental identification which is transcendence with, that is when you are part of a team. Sometimes you will be so at one in your movements, your interactions, that there will be no duality, no split. For instance, sports is a very good example of this. Perfect footballers will be playing, not the whole time, but at least in part as if they were one. Similarly cooks. People who get to know each other will anticipate each other's moves. That is the fourth form of non-duality.

All this really is beginning to make transcendence seem quite a central concept but also quite a non-religious one. I am not going to say irreligious because obviously it does come into religion as well. But we are taking it out of any association with a special place or a special object. We see that transcendence in the sense of emergence out of the blue is essential for any form of creativity. Creativity is doing something which has never been done before. Something original. And in this sense it is a necessary feature of any human action, for no two situations, and therefore no two responses to them, can ever be completely the same—so however much creativity is suppressed, it can never be eliminated. Then there is transcendental identification which we must have in order to understand each other or to do anything in life. That I am associating with love. Then there is transcendence in the sense of transcendental action, that is non-dual action which is essential to agency. Creativity, love and agency (including

holistic agency) are the three features of human life that I would particularly like to foreground today. They all involve different but overlapping forms of transcendence.

How does it then relate to a further concept of transcendence or kind of transcendence that we might have, that is when we talk about transcendental consciousness. All these forms of transcendence I have been talking about involve a form of transcendental consciousness in the sense of non-dual consciousness, but you may want to argue that the mind and our being is so structured that there is a level of consciousness which monitors, as it were, all our other quotidian everyday acts. So *transcendental consciousness* will then be the *monitor*. And what we will be trying to do for example in a state of meditation would be to reach that point of transcendental consciousness. Rather than using the terminology of transcendental consciousness I want to use a different sort of terminology for talking about the self. For here we looked at three features—creativity, love and right-action—which are things people do. So now we have to ask: Who are we? What are we essentially? And the extraordinary thing is that most of us are not who we think we are. Most of our self-conceptions are based on mis-identifications, mis-I-dentifications. We mis-identify mainly with our ego, but also with our minds or our careers, or our particular achievements, or our desires, or our possessions, or our problems, or our issues. There are actually three important conceptions in our normal sense of our selves.

First of all there is a sense in which the self is the ego. What is the ego? This is something, an I which is separated, cut off and in opposition to all other I's and opposition to social and natural forms generally. This I has a sense of itself as entirely separate from the rest of reality. This ego is essential to the philosophical discourse of modernity, essential to capitalism, essential to most of our existing social institutions. Because a lot of things in our society presuppose an isolated subject. So we say that someone possesses something else; possession is a very good example because when you actually possess something then you have to ask what is that peculiar relationship between you and that poss ession? How does a car that you possess actually relate to you, does it really relate to you from any deep ontological level in a

different way from anyone else. This concept of the ego I want to argue is an illusion. There is no self which is separate from other selves and the object world. We are not separate from the rest of the universe. We are intrinsically connected with it.

There is another sense of the self which is not an illusion and that is a sense in which we are all embodied personalities. As an embodied personality I am clearly differentiated in space and time from Lakshmi, because she is over there and I am here. Now we can have this sense of being embodied personalities without having the sense that we are separates. We can have the sense that there is no separateness between us but we still have to recognise that in the physical world we are physically distinct. The point of physical distinction is characteristically the point of agency. This is the point from which I must act. This is the only point from which I can speak, I cannot speak from Lakshmi or from you. I can only speak from myself, so the embodied personality must be real.

What is the embodied personality? The embodied personality definitely has a mind, emotions, feelings and it definitely has a physical being. In fact it is the physical nature of our embodiment which defies our separateness and gives a degree of validity to the sense of the ego that we all have which is part of the logic of capitalism and our society. We are at least tripartite beings. We have mind, emotions and bodies. What is interesting from the point of view of our topic today is that the philosophical discourse has really only concentrated on the mind and body. It is not really bothered about emotions. And this of course reflects the sexist and chauvinist structure of our society. Because men think that they have the better minds because they are better in left-brain thought. Men think that they have better bodies, but you can ask them, when was the last time you had a baby? Is not that as clever as digging so many tonnes of coal? The idea that women do not have such good minds is terrible. Our emotional nature is really very interesting because this is probably the most important part of our being to get a grip on. Because what really drives us are emotions. Fear, love, hate, jealousy, possessiveness. Possessiveness, we cling on to something, we regard it as our own. Then in some way, any action which is done in a possessive way will obviously be a non-dual action. You can also see the

critique of dual or split action as linking up very much to the critique of possessiveness and attachment which are two things very familiar from the discourse of the east, the spiritual discourse of the east. This neglected field is actually absolutely central. If we have got three aspects of our embodied personality, is that the end of the matter of the self.

Well clearly it cannot be because actually it is not clear at all where your embodied personality begins and ends. What is part of you? Is your being a philosophy or sociology student put of you or not? Are your parents part of you? Certainly your genes are part of you. In your genes you carry the physical imprint of the past. You carry your ancestors around with you. Actually when talking about emancipation we also have to free ourselves in some way from our genes. We have to be free of everything, everything that we could inherit. Not just our circumstances, not just all our wrong attitudes, our possessiveness, not just everything which is so intrinsically related to capitalism and all the other oppressive structures in our society. But also we have to be free from our genes. Coming back to the question of what we are. Buddhists have for long said that the sense of the self as an embodied personality is going to be relative because where the self begins and ends, how it is constituted, what sort of relations we take into account, whether we include the causes and the effects, that is all going to be somewhat relative and perspectival. But one thing is certainly clear. Some embodied personalities are freer and more empowered than others. There is a sense in which our qualities and powers change and develop over time. So I would not go so far as some Buddhists and say that the Buddhist sense of self is also not real; all you can say is this sense of self—the self as embodied personality—has a transient and slightly fuzzy character to it. We cannot be too relativistic about it because what we centrally are in the world is embodied personalities.

There is a third aspect of the self which I am going to call the transcendentally real self. This is that state which underpins our embodied personality. This is what I am going to call our ground-state. Let us just consider how we might argue that we do have an essential or inner nature. This is something very deep and profound about human beings. First, before I argue this—

because we know that some religious traditions have always said that we have something very deep within us—let us see how some secular thinkers actually presuppose something very similar. Marx says the communist society of the future will be a society in which the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all. That means your development, your growth, your fulfilment matters as much to me as my own. That is a stunning critique of egoism and that is a beautiful idea which means that in some way we must be, there must be a level of being actually now within us even though it may be obscured by an awful lot else which we actually are, which could develop, flower into being those beings who could sustain such an ideal. Such an ideal that your own development, everyone's development was an important condition, was the condition of your own obviously presupposes the potentiality of our becoming such beings. We must have that potentiality within us. How could you argue that this potentiality is actually real and connected up with some other features of the world? You could argue by looking at us from the point of view of the universe. Critical realism as you probably know has a view of the world as being structured, differentiated and changing. In respect of its stratification what we have is a nested series of levels of being which are emergent powers or properties of more basic, deeper levels of being so we can see the stratification within me. We can see this as revealed to science. For example we explain the overt behaviour manifested by tables and chairs in terms of their molecular structure and we explain molecular structure in terms of atomic structure, and we explain atomic in terms of electronic and ultimately quantum mechanical structure, which seems to be a limit that contemporary science cannot get beyond.

What we can say is that there is something essential and ultimate in being which is also ingredient within us. This ingredient would be our innermost being or our most essential nature because it would be that aspect of our being upon which all other properties of our being depended. We could not get angry unless we had the ground-state properties which made anger possible. Some of these ground-state properties I want to argue will be quite surprising, we cannot do anything without creativity, love,

action, spontaneous action. That is the basic idea, the idea that we have a fundamental or innermost level of being.

How would this level of being relate to other aspects of being? Exactly the same argument, as we are part of the universe there is something essential to the universe which must be ingredient in us. That argument applies to all beings. So everything which is within our cosmic totality must have an essential ingredient within it. It would not be a universe, one universe, unless there was something which actually all these elements in the cosmic totality made it one universe. What is it that makes it one universe? The easiest way to look at it is to think that the universe is characterised by what I call the cosmic envelope. So we must have a most basic state and everything in the universe must have a basic state and the envelope which encompasses all these most basic states or the ground-states of every being I would call the cosmic envelope. What is outside the cosmic envelope we know nothing about. How the cosmic envelope came into being or how it will end we know nothing about. What we do know is that through our capacity to transcendentally identify we can identify with other aspects of the cosmic envelope. So I can become one with you just in speech. You do not have to feel that I become one with the whole of you but I become one with one aspect of your being. So that when you are listening to me there is no sense of separation between what I say and what you hear, in that moment we are one, there is no you as distinct from me, there is no split or duality and there is no ego either. So as I can become one with you in sound, so I am one with sound; and as I can become one with sound, so I cut become one with a rose, a tree, a pet, so I can become one with any aspect of being. This means that the cosmic envelope must be implicitly characterised by the capacity for transcendental identification.

This means that the cosmic envelope—even if items and beings emerge as a process of time, even if, as according to modern evolutionary theory, from inanimate matter, in the big bang so that you had helium then you had hydrogen and then gradually millions of years later you had the planet earth, physical matter, and after that vital matter, organic life and after organic life conciousness—is characterised by implicit consciousness. Because I can transcendentally identify with anything in the cosmos, no

matter how material or brute, the consciousness which I experience is somehow magically endowed in everything else and that consciousness must have been there implicitly at the beginning. And of course there is no other way in which we can make sense of evolution unless we suppose that consciousness was implicit, enfolded at the beginning of time. Consciousness somehow magically endows us with the capacity to transcendentally identify with other beings in the universe.

All we have to say is this cosmic envelope is implicitly consciousness. The idea of matter, mind as having emerged diachronically over time out of organic life and out of matter is quite consistent with the idea that consciousness was enfolded or implicit in matter potentially. What happens when you look at a plant and become one with the plant is that you identify with that plant in consciousness, consciousness must be implicit in the plant for you to become one with it. My words must be already implicit in you for you to become one with what I am saying.

To use a more text-book kind of example, Newton discovered gravity. What happens is that you, as a teacher, have to explain gravity to your student, but there comes a point when the student just has to see it. You cannot force students to learn something, they just have to at some point see it. If you are a teacher in logic, you can endlessly go on trying to prove a theory in logic on the blackboard. If you say to your student do you see it, and they say no, then you try something else. But at some point the student will not get it until he just sees it, he just has to see it. This capacity to transcendentally identify with what you are being told means that every discovery, every creation is in a way for the person who is learning it for the first time also a re-discovery or a recreation. Every student has to recreate when they understand gravity as Newton's insight. We cannot exaggerate the enormity of this insight. We see a stone falling from the sky, we think the cause, the momentum of filling actually requires a tremendous turning upside-down to see the earth as pulling objects to the ground, and you can try to do this; it is difficult to try and think of objects being pulled to bodies, bodies as attracting. Or think of the break that Copernicus made when he, instead of viewing the sun as moving around the earth, viewed the earth as moving

around the sun. While the heliocentric theory was known to many different traditions long before the European middle ages, it was certainly a discovery for the European middle ages. If you think about it, it is a dizzying concept. It is absolutely dizzying. How difficult is it to do that. We all seem to do that very easily now, just accept it. But think how difficult it was initially to make that conceptual change. What this suggests really is that learning is always a matter you have to see for yourself, you have to see, feel, understand it. And actually learning or knowledge which is not part of your innermost being, which is heteronomous, something stuck in your mind, which you have not completely seen, absorbed, taken into yourself, such knowledge is not real knowledge. When you fully understand physics you can just do physics. When you can fully understand a language you just speak it. While you are learning it then you have to remember the rules of grammar, when you are learning driving you have to remember which way to turn the wheel when you are driving backwards. Yet to an experienced driver there is no problem. You think you may be able to remember when as a small child you first tried to tie your shoelaces. Think how difficult it is sometimes to have to relearn in life: how difficult it must be for someone who is ill to have to move a muscle.

Once we have acquired a knowledge, an understanding, then it must become part of our being. So we can now map out a kind of subjective dialectic of discovery. To learn anything, to wider stand anything first you must see it. This suggests that we have, what I am going to argue for, the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality. But what I am also going to argue for is that this necessarily entails a commitment to universal self-realisation. So there is nothing egoistic in that. I teach you something and I can only get so far unless you see it. That brings out an aspect of truth within the Platonic theory of anamnesis. Because what Plato said was that basically knowledge is recollection. All I am saying is not that knowledge is recollection but the potential for it must be implicit. It must be contained, enfolded within you. If you did not have the potential to see it, it could not be actualised. The actualisation of the potential to see it is the stimulus created jointly by your teacher aid your hard work, your stretching of your

concepts to get yourself into a position to see it. So that moment of 'I see it', is akin to Newton's moment of discovery of gravity. Re-discovery. What kind of potential did Newton discover in the universe? He discovered, this is my conjecture, the alethic truth or innermost being relative to the laws of physics which had been discovered at the time, the truth of the truth of the next rung or level of reality. He actually just saw it. That gravity, the concept of gravity would be on this worldview an implicit potential within each of us. We see how easily we see it now. For Newton it was very difficult. And Newton by an extraordinary effort got to the point where he reached transcendental identification with gravity. He actually became one with gravity. That is my conjecture. This would be a way in which we could acknowledge the epistemic transcendence of gravity for Newton, the way in which it came out of the blue, with this ontological immanence. The way in which, though it was out of the blue for him and out of the blue for knowledge, it was actually something which was a real feature of the world. So scientific discovery, the discovery of something objective, will just be the discovery of the innermost truth implicit in that level of being that you are already very close to. You cannot begin to understand gravity in a way that physicists do unless you are already a master of the first six grades of physics. You can say that Newton was a path breaker in that he went through those six grades for us. Now we have all formulated and regimented it and it is very easy for us to make that re-discovery of gravity.

So gravity had to be something not only out there, it had to be something in here; but actually what was happening in the moment that Newton discovered gravity was that he became one with the alethic truth, that is the real truth, of gravity And in becoming one with gravity he was able to produce a scientific revolution. All I am saying is that the truth of gravity was already implicit within him. This takes us back, of course it must have been, but he had to dig very deep in an objective way down into the innermost reaches of his being to reach that truth. If you want to accept that line of reasoning then you can say perhaps it is not so absurd to claim, as I have heard some people claim, that you can find many truths on atomic structure in the Vedas that

actually were there because people reached deep enough down into their being, even though they could not communicate it to anyone else, in meditative or far down meditative states. That remains a possibility. Who knows what went on when Pythagoras or Plato were teaching. Just to go through what would happen in the case of a dialectic of learning. You have this truth, you suddenly re-discover it for yourself, of gravity. Then you must make this truth part of your being. So long as it is not part of your being, so long as it is something heteronomous you cannot act in a non-dualistic way with it. When you see it only in a nondualistic way, it stands a chance of being spontaneously right. Non-dual action is spontaneous action. Any dualistic action will have a split intentionality and cannot at least be spontaneously right. If it is right, it is only right if everything else happens successfully or just correctly as it should.

So far I have argued for the importance of transcendence, of the ground-state, of the cosmic envelope and for transcendental identification. If we are to do anything, if we must ultimately do it spontaneously, another way of looking at this is, if we are to do anything then ultimately we must do it. Is there any other person who can do it? Ultimately, we are the point of agency. All action has to be related back to the self. The only way you can change the world is by doing something. This does not mean that your vision has to be restricted. I argue that the ego, the sense of your own self as separate is an illusion, but the only way you can bring about a better society is by acting. And when you are acting you are doing something on yourself. You are not doing something on anyone else. Your action may have an effect on someone else but you cannot change anyone else. You can only change, effect change from the point of your action. This is one of the core theses of the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality, which derives from ancient Egypt through ancient Greece, and is called the hermetic tradition.

Ultimately you have to test every truth for yourself. The only way you know what is right and wrong is by testing it in yourself. What I am saying is that it is actually the only way you can act. You cannot act through someone else. If you look at our

manipulative instrumentalist reasoning it is all directed at trying to make someone else do something for you. You tell your functionary, but how does he remain your functionary? Only because his circumstances are such that he feels he must do what you say. If he stopped feeling that then he would not be your functionary. You may have the most wonderful insight into the need for evolutionary change. How do you communicate that to other people? You could only do it by acting in the best possible way, by being the most forceful communicator yourself. You cannot get someone else to communicate for you. So that as you become more free of all your sense of egoism and all the elements of heteronomy, all those things which are inconsistent with your ground-state, your personality, your embodied personality will expand and grow. And when you no longer have a sense of ego, a sense of your own separate identity distinct from the rest of the world, then you will not be treating the rest of the world in a manipulative, instrumental way but you will be entirely oriented to the emancipation of other beings just as much as your own.

This standpoint of self-referentiality is the only standpoint which is consistent with an orientation to the good society, the eudaimonistic society, that is the global and universal revolution. When you realise that you are not separate from the rest of the universe, then you can adopt the standpoint of no ego, and when you understand the primacy of self-referentiality then you will inevitably be attempting in your right-action to materially embody, practically engage mid work for the self-realisation of everyone else. Not for a moment could you accept the goal of individual emancipation. Individual freedom. In fact if you look at individual freedom, what could this possibly be? If I really am separate from you then individual freedom is an illusion. The only freedom can be universal self-realisation, universal freedom. If I have no ego then how can I be liberated or free if you are still unfree? This gives a rationale to the idea of the Bodhisattva. The idea that he is not just giving up his freedom for others but that he has no sense of his own freedom. He has no ego to liberate. He is just an expanded personality who is working through what he must work through physically here in the world, as an embodied personality with physical, emotional, mental and

supramental powers, for the realisation of all beings. There is no incompatibility between commitment to universal self-realisation and what seems to be the most subjective position you can have, that no one else can liberate you, you have to do it yourself, and you cannot impose freedom or emancipation upon anyone else. Freedom cannot impose on anyone else, you cannot emancipate anyone else. You can unlock the prison doors, emancipation in that sense, but ultimately the prisoners will walk out of the doors. Ultimately all you can do for the whole of society, every being in society is to unlock the doors, they have to walk out. This theory then is one which implies a commitment to total universal self-realisation.

Creativity then is the emergence of something new. How does this come about? Creativity, the emergence of something new, actually is a feature of every genuine human act. How impossible it is not to be creative. Imagine on a factory assembly line, which seems the complete opposite of creativity, what tremendous regimentation it involves to stop people being creative. It is extraordinary. We can generate a fantastic critique of the institution of organisational structures of our society just by looking at how creativity is suppressed. But a factory line cannot keep going, your computer will not work unless you are innovative, creative, you can adapt immediately, spontaneously, intuitively to the situation that is wrong. The workers keep the factory line going and they do it in a spontaneous, intuitive, non-dual way. That is their spontaneous creativity that the logic of our social systems deny. If you think about it repetition is really impossible because the repetition is always the production of something new. When you repeat something it can be very very boring but actually what you are doing is changing the status quo, changing from what it would have been otherwise. Creativity is essential to charge and is implicit in every transformative human act, let me relate this back to left versus right brain. I will just say a little bit about love and a little bit about agency. Creativity is the emergence of something new out of the blue, but something which must be implicit in the creative agent.

Love is a basic attractive, binding, healing, totalising force in the universe. How is it that the most horrible things we know,

if scratched hard enough, are actually sustained by love. What could be worse than war, violence between armed bodies of men. What does war actually involve? It involves solidarity of the soldiers at the front. That is the full manifestation of love. It involves the support and sustenance of their sisters at home. If you scratch any emotional situation you will find there love. Even to take an example from Plato, using it in a slightly different way from him, a gang of robbers could not stay together for a moment unless they showed some degree of solidarity. This is the developing, nurturing, shaping force in social life.

Spontaneous activity we have always seen is necessary for anything else. We can look now at five cycles of creativity which are involved in everything, anything, any state of being, anything that happens in the world.

First you have being, which is implicit. Then there must be the moment of becoming. These are all mapped out as moments or stadia or systems of critical realism. The first I have called ontology, which just means thinking being, and then we have to deepen our thinking of being to encompass being as a process, we have to think being using concepts of absence, think being processually, think being as involving change. The third thing when we are thinking being in a concrete way, is to think being as being bound together; we have to think being holistically as a totality, and I would argue that the primary and binding force in the social world is love. The fourth level of thinking being, we are not only thinking being processually, as involving creativity and emergence, process and change, we are thinking being holistically as a whole, the fourth moment which we think being as involving transformative agency. That is as involving making, doing, and objectification. When you perform an act you send something out into the world. The ideal here at the level of agency would be to get your actions absolutely right so that what you send out into the world correctly reflected your intentionality so that your intentionality was fulfilled. This cycle has a fifth level which is the fulfilment of intentionality in the world. If your intentionality is not fulfilled in the world then you have a choice: you either return to the task and try and fulfil it in the world or you move on to something else. If your intentionality is not correctly

reflected in the world and if you do not let go or release your intentionality then it will still be in you whatever happens.

Let me show you how this works. Supposing I have the intentionality, or someone else has the intentionality to hit someone else in the world, that intention to hit someone else will actually, whether they succeed in it or not, bind that other being in transcendental identification; what happens is that I become one with someone else. Or, we could argue from the standpoint of self-referentiality that I must also be that other. That other, that gravity that must be implicit within me, therefore what I would hit or teach, you must also be implicit within me. So the hitting of you actually is also a hitting within me. This is how *karma* is not something speculative but actually entailed by this ontology that I am mapping. You are co-present in me, therefore whatever I intend to you, will be within me. Because you are actually in me, and so that will return to me. The only way it will not return to me is if I let go unconditionally and in a completely unattached way—I just give it to you. If I try and tell you something and I hope you will learn or understand what I have told you, and I do not just give it to you unconditionally and spontaneously, then this wanting to have an effect on you will still remain within me. If every act you do, you just totally give completely, unconditionally and spontaneously to the world, then there is no way it can bind you because you have lost all sense of attachment. You are the world, remember you are the world, this is true, absolutely true, there is no individual ego, we are all bound up with other aspects, other beings in the world, and all other beings in the world are implicitly one within us. What you have to do is reach a point where whatever your act, your intentionality will be fulfilled, and you will have no sense of desire or attachment to the result. If you have an attachment to that result, then that will be in you in one way or another.

What would it be to be in such a state of non-attachment? This would mean that you were at one with your ground-state, this would mean action flowing spontaneously from you in the best possible way. Then being at one with your innermost being you would be maximally sensitive to the whole of the universe aid you would act from the only point of agency you know, which

is your physically embodied personality, but you would act from the perspective of the whole totality. Acting from such a perspective, your inner submissiveness to your ground-state, your clearing of your embodied personality and all mental, emotional and physical aspects which could mean blocks on your action, then you would just be an extension of your ground-state and you would just immediately and spontaneously be at one with the rest of the universe, and act in a maximally coherent, compassionate and creative way.

There is an old question. Someone says they go into a lovely state, and they go into a state of unity with themselves. If you think you are in that state of non-duality then you are not, you are actually in a state of thinking non-duality. If you think you are meditating then you are not meditating, if you think you are in a state of non-transcendence then you are not. Now we all have to talk, we are operating in a dualistic world. All the structures of contradiction and oppression and alienation are a part of this dualistic world. We can be oriented to the transformation of this world but we have to be in this world. The old standpoint, the standpoint where we could opt out of this world is no longer possible. This may have been feasible 2,000 years ago or fifty years ago. Today it is not feasible. We are all so inter-dependent and interconnected now and the planet is hurtling to a position of global crisis, there is no way you could claim to have a sense of no ego and not be in this world. The average height of Bangladesh is 4 feet above sea level, so if present ecological trends continue, in fifty years there will be no Bangladesh, and that will be true of all the islands. We have seen from the events of the past couple of months how bound together we are. The acts and reactions of a few dozen people have hurtled the whole world into crisis. These include governments. Who actually knows any government which is really constituted in a fully democratic way? But we do know that what a few people decide in politics on some whim or other affects us all profoundly. At a structural level we know that we have chronic economic problems alongside our chronic political, social and cultural problems. Even our lives are becoming shallow as the logic of commodification and reification really takes hold everywhere. In this situation, how could you claim to be a

person who had no ego, a person who was enlightened, unless you were in this world? You have to be in this world. You can have an orientation to the transformation of this world but the only way you can achieve this orientation is by actually effecting it in some way from the point of agency with which you must act.

There are five theorems in relation to action.

First, we must act. We cannot not act. That is what I call the axiological imperative. So even a person who thinks that by going on a retreat they are abstaining from action, they are also acting. Secondly, our action is intentional. We must take subjective responsibility for our intentionality. Unless our intentionality is completely pure then there is a chance that our intentionality will not be fulfilled. The purer our intentionality the more likely it is that it will be fulfilled. Does this intentionality not have to be in a dual-state? No. Because just like knowledge you can have the intention to liberate the world but you do not carry that intention in your head. Just like I do not carry the knowledge of Greek or some other philosophy in my head, it is in me. Just like your knowledge of driving or cooking is in you. The third feature of action is that at some level it must be basic and non-dual. So what I am arguing for really is that we expand the zone of non-duality in our lives. The fourth feature of action is that it always takes place in the context of (and the fifth feature is that whatever I do always affects) four planes of social being.

First of all it always involves and affects material transactions of nature. Then it always involves and affects our social interaction with others. Third, it always involves and affects, re producing and transforming in some way, a social structure, and finally it always involves or affects the stratification of your embodied personality.

So the philosophical standpoint from which I am talking has clear implications along all these lines. We know this in terms of our material transactions with nature, in terms of the instrumental reasoning that is used by man, or in terms of the social systems that he has created and he himself sustains. And let us not think that social systems are things out there. Social systems, like capitalism, are not just out there, they are also in here, inhering in us in our daily activity, so that we unwittingly reproduce or

sustain the very structures we deplore. We first have to disconnect them from within us before our actions can be maximally feasible outside. So long as you feel greed, lust, possessiveness within yourself, and you are fearful or proud, then you are the ideal functionary for capitalism. Even if you feel anger, anger is a defence against pride, and the pride is something that capitalism depends on—the pride of everyone just to get a job for a job's sake or just to get a wage to keep up with their neighbours. All these negative emotions you see are part of the logic of these social systems. Only by operating from a point which is as clear in terms of thought, in terms of feeling and physically, and which is going to be unblocked by heteronomous determinations, can you be a good agent of social change. The best thing you can do is to strive to be such a person as an embodied agent in the world, because you must act in the world. So this is arguing for a form of spirituality in which if you like transcendence or meditation becomes a part of daily life. It is not something removed from daily life. In fact if you still want to call it by that name it is your practice in daily life. And the practice is one of transformation.

If you doubt this for a moment you just scratch beneath the surface of some negative emotion and you will find love there. Love cannot do any harm. You have some problem with a situation, then just think creativity. Think creatively, be creative about it. If you do not think you are creative then just scratch anything, scratch your routines, you will see how creative you are in sustaining routines. Often you may get to a point where you will see that the mind itself is a trap. And this is the point where you transcend the mind and the mind as an instrument and you suspend thought and 'unthink'. When you get to the point where you can use the mind and unthink at will then you will be in a maximally creative space. That is the sort of space you will be in when you are in your ground-state. When you get to that point then you will immediately and spontaneously, be maximally creative in the world. Similarly when you get to the point where in your emotions you feel nothing but love, joy and happiness then you will be maximally effective in the world. This does not mean that you behave in a soppy way. The best way of loving someone may be to tell them the truth and that may hurt. This does not

mean that you see it as being revolutionary. The best way of loving people may be to transform structures, but this does not mean that you never kill. The best way of transforming a structure may be to shoot someone, though I am not saying it is. If you see two people fighting each other, then showing love does not necessarily mean that you abstain from the conflict. So love does not imply any particular action. It is consistent with a lot of different behaviours.

When you are in your ground-state or moving towards it then you will be embodying within yourself the ideals of the three traditional paths to spiritual enlightenment: the path of knowledge, the path of devotional love and the path of action. Because you will be engaged in action.

There is nothing which I have said here that necessarily involves god, nor does it mean that you cannot believe in god. All it means is that you are committed to action for your own freedom and self-realisation and the freedom and self-realisation of all other beings in the universe. And you can be so committed in a completely secular way or you can do so on the basis of a certain set of religious beliefs and engaged in particular religious practices. Nor does this involve any prediction of what is going to happen in the future, because if you look at it any prediction would not be particularly bright. But it does involve themes that all emancipatory projects must presuppose for these projects to make sense. Which gives us hope. If you look empirically at the way the world is going then there is no hope. But let us look at it another way. The world, capitalism, the structures of oppression, evil, violence and hatred could not survive without our good nature, our love, our creative work. The totality of master–slave relationships depends entirely on the creativity of slaves. The ugly, false, vicious depend entirely on the true. It could not exist for a moment without the true, the beautiful and the loving. Nothing could be sustained. We could exist without the social structures that are oppressing us. They could not exist without us. So they depend on us because we not only represent, we are the essential ingredients of the universe. We are at the basic, fundamental level of the universe, we have the power—that level which I have called the cosmic envelope, the strength of the binding force of the

universe—embodied within us. Remember capitalism and all those terrible social systems that oppress us, including those which we have internalised as our angers, hatreds and greeds, which repress us internally, they all depend on our freedom, our creativity, our love which is our greatest strength and on our sense of equity (or true equality which is respecting the differences between us all), and our inherent capacity for right-action. And they could not survive for a moment without us and our powers. So let us take strength from our realisation of this strength (i.e. power) which our strength (that one-way dependency) gives us.

Chapter Ten

The Philosophy of MetaReality: Identity, Spirituality, System*

In his new book, Reflections on MetaReality (RMR), *Roy Bhaskar claims to articulate a new philosophy that transcends critical realism, while preserving its insights. And indeed it proceeds by immanent critique of critical realism, thereby extending critical realism's systematic attempt to think being.*

With the demise of historical socialism and the rise of bourgeois triumphalism in the late 80s and the 90s, the deficiency, absence or lack Bhaskar has pinpointed in the discourse and practice of critical realism and the Left in general is that insufficient attention is being paid to the spiritual dimension of human life, with the consequence that the Right is hegemonic in that area. So he self-consciously set out to remedy this lack, embarking on 'the spiritual exposition of being'.

Bhaskar's previous book, From East to West (FEW), *offered 'a theory of the necessary spiritual presuppositions of emancipatory [. . .] projects', adding a fifth aspect (5A) to the MELD schema as a further transcendental and dialectical development and deepening of his system, introducing or extending notions of ultimate alethic truth or god*

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* Part 1 of interview with Mervyn Hartwig, London, May 2002. Also forthcoming in *Journal of Critical Realism*, June 2002.

at 1M; creativity and transcendence at 2E; love at 3L; spontaneous right-action and cosmic consciousness or enlightenment at 4D; and fulfilled intentionality or self-reflexivity at 5A itself.

RMR *both systematises and develops what was initiated in* FEW. *Its basic line of argument is that a non-dual world or ultimate zone of being underpins and is co-present in an occluded way in the dual world of alienation and contradiction in which we live, as a condition of its possibility, and that this requires a new philosophy of identity for its exposition. Realism about this world, about transcendence, thus entails the self-transcendence of critical realism itself, which is a philosophy of non-identity or duality. Bhaskar calls this non-dual world the cosmic envelope (in which the deepest natures or ground-states of all beings sit and are connected), describing it also as Bohm's implicate order of pure enfolded being, of pure potentiality, of 'Platonic anamnesis', involving 'a level of consciousness beyond thought itself'. Other key figures, elaborated from* FEW, *are generalised co-presence or synchronicity and the inwardness of being (everything is implicated or enfolded within everything else); and transcendental identification in consciousness between entities and beings within the explicated or become dual world we inhabit.*

Mervyn

In *FEW* you distinguish (i) absolute being, characterised by identity from (ii) relative being, characterised by non-identity involving duality and union, and both from (iii) demi-real relative being, characterised also by non-identity but involving dualism and alienation. The new book largely drops the discourse of the demi-real and runs together, on the one hand, identity and union, and, on the other, duality and dualism. What's going on? From your perspective the evil and ignorance of the dual world within which we live is, as you said in *FEW*, 'a sort of grand illusion', but as you also keep insisting, illusions are only too real causally. This double aspect is precisely what the figure of the demi-real is designed to capture—like mirages, illusions are real in causal efficacy yet remain illusions because they have no real object. So why (largely) drop the figure of the demi-real, along with the distinction between duality and dualism? Are you saying that critical realism, as a philosophy of non-identity, is now only

regionally applicable—appropriate only for the study of master–slave-type societies—but that we need to invoke the identity such a world presupposes both fully to explain and to move beyond it?

Roy

You are absolutely right, I do say that this transcends but preserves critical realism, and it transcends it in a very radical way. It can be thought of as having been arrived at by taking realism about transcendence seriously. I'd like to talk a little bit about transcendence; in so far as the position in *RMR* constitutes a real break from and development beyond *FEW*, it involves understanding the absolutely foundational role the non-dual and transcendental plays in our life. Because most people who have talked about transcendence have regarded it as being something that is rather unusual or recondite, something that we have, say, in a magical moment of union with god, union with our higher self, or perhaps which we capture in a blissful experience of listening to Bach or Beethoven.

The non-dual plays a triple role in the new philosophy I'm developing. Firstly, we have to see the non-dual—whether it is consistent with our ground-states or not—as a necessary condition for all social interaction and human agency. Secondly, all social interaction and human agency, whether non-dual or not, is unilaterally dependent upon the non-dual level of our ground-states, which constitute the most fundamental level of our being and connect us through what I call the cosmic envelope to the rest of the universe. Thirdly, if we go deeply enough into any non-dual moment, that is into moments which are constitutive of all our experience, even the most quotidian or routine sort, we find, amazingly enough, that it reveals the properties of what the Vedic tradition called 'bliss consciousness of being' (*sat-chit-anand*); or what has been called 'suchness' (*tethata*) which is also 'emptiness' (*sunyata*) or the Buddhist 'void', but which is also the rich Buddha-nature in everything; so that in each moment of our experience, if we really go deeply into it, we get a taste or anticipation of the absolute, the ground-state, or 'heaven'. Another way of putting this is to say that, if you go deeply enough into anything, you will ultimately find its existential source in a ground-state on

the cosmic envelope, and in the non-dual state of transcendental identification with its ultimate existential base you will be, in your ground-state, at one with its ground-state. So the three moments of non-duality, which I have been differentiating, are then all brought together.

The most radical thing I am saying here is that transcendence and transcendental identification is a ubiquitous feature and a necessary condition for all social interaction and all human agency; that, unless we were in a non-dual state, I cannot understand what you are saying. In that aspect of reality in which I understand your question to me, we have transcendental identification. I immediately identify with you, I am in a non-dual state. It is not a dual state. When someone is watching television they immediately follow it, they are not in a dual state. When someone is performing a basic spontaneous act, they are in an immediate state of non-duality and we cannot do anything at all unless at some point we just did something immediately, spontaneously, basically. And then, of course, as complex beings, we can do lots of other things too in virtue of our spontaneous basic acts. What I am saying is that society couldn't function, and we couldn't communicate, or do anything at all, unless we were in non-dual states. That is the first aspect.

The second aspect concerns our ground-states, which are characterised by qualities such as, corresponding to 1M, our implicit human potential and freedom; corresponding to 2E, creativity; corresponding to 3L, love; corresponding to 4D, right-action; and corresponding to 5A, the fulfilment of our intentionality. Now the important point here is to see that we can't do anything in our social activity that does not make use of or depend upon these ground-state qualities, such as creativity, love and right-action. We cannot do anything at all except creatively. There cannot be a social situation which was not underpinned and characterised by love. We cannot say that someone had performed an act at all, even if what he did was something absolutely stupid and heinous, unless it was, at some level, a spontaneous right-action.

The third aspect, which is not really very well developed in *RMR* (but will be in the forthcoming books, particularly *Beyond*

East and West[1] and *MetaReality*[2]), is that in which, if you go into the fine structure of a non-dual moment, you will see that it is characterised by some remarkable qualities, and if you can stay with these, they give you a kind of pre-figuration of what society might be like. And that is really extraordinary. In a way, in each moment of our life, if we live, experience it really clearly, fully, we have a little taste of heaven. Of course, it is occluded and dominated by hell. So these then are the three aspects.

The first feature depends upon the fact that we can't do anything at all unless we are in transcendental identification, unless we are performing at some level transcendental acts. But these need not be consistent with our ground-states. Consider someone who is doing something really terrible, like shooting someone else, or beating someone up. That can be a non-dual act, and in that sense it is transcendental, but it is not coming from their ground-state. The second feature then pinpoints the fact that the robbery or murder or whatever, which involved that non-dual component, still couldn't have been possible without at some level being sustained by his or someone else's love, solidarity, compassion, creativity. Normally robbers are very creative people, and they also have to be loyal to their own kind. If you take the most regimented actions in capitalist society, you will find that there is a level which is, so to speak, below and underpinning the level of the extraction of surplus value in Marx's theory, which is unpaid. Consider the role of women's domestic labour in the reproduction of labour power. Or the sense in which it is not a part of Andrew's 'job description' here to make the coffee. But he does. And similarly it is not part of his job to kick the computer, but when he has to, he does. And this sort of thing is necessary for any production line, in any office, in any household. There is a level at which we have to act spontaneously, unconditionally, effortlessly, in the moment and without thinking.

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[1] Roy Bhaskar, *Beyond East and West: Spirituality and Comparative Religion in an Age of Global Crisis*. Sage: New Delhi, London: Thousand Oaks, 2002.

[2] Roy Bhaskar, *MetaReality: The Philosophy of MetaReality, Volume 1: Creativity, Love and Freedom*. Sage: New Delhi, London: Thousand Oaks, forthcoming.

Mervyn

Nonetheless we remain dual beings embodying both duality and dualism.

Roy

Precisely. The thing is, we are almost all dual beings. What does this mean? This means that in addition to our ground-states, and qualities which are consistent with our ground-states, we have lots of heteronomous qualities which block, constrain, drain our ground-states. This highlights the importance of the idea of the TINA formation. This really seems to me to be central to all emancipatory projects.

The idea in any emancipatory project is that there is a level of being which is basic, primary, good, natural, and that that level of being is occluded and dominated by a superstructure which constrains it. That's what I think every emancipatory theory claims—that we are in conflict, we are in contradiction with ourselves. It is not only our fault as individuals, because society is like that too; we, as heteronomous individuals, reproduce or transform a heteronomously constituted social form. Now, the extraordinary thing is that, if you look at the amount of energy we actually put into keeping all our neuroses, addictions, oppressions and self-oppressions—that is, our heteronomy—going, it is just not worth the candle. Because all of that—all the blocks and oppressions—have to be sustained, kept in place, by the energy, intelligence, love, creativity and our capacity for right-action which flows from the ground-state.

So the obvious question is: why don't we get rid of all the bullshit? Because, for anything we want to do, we'll do it better and be better off without the constraints on our ground-state qualities, which block and impede our activity in the world. For we need those ground-state qualities anyway, even if we want to do something like rob a bank. Suppose we decide to do something which we know is really counter-productive, we will have to utilise and drain our creativity and energy even more just to sustain that counter-productive act. So I believe that the natural state of being is our ground-state, and if we were in our ground-states we would all flourish. For there is no contradiction, rather

mutual entailment, between the goals of self-realisation and collective human emancipation, or even more basically, universal self-realisation. Even becoming a little bit clearer, a little bit freer, in yourself enables you to act a little bit more coherently, clearly, socially.

Putting this in a nutshell, there is only one thing we need in life, and that is to be clear. Whatever you set out to do, whatever objective in life you have, that will set you on a dialectic in which you will ultimately come to see that the only objective which is sustainable is to be a being who is consistent with their ground-state. Because if you're not, you will always have a split intentionality. Your split intentionality will mean that you have unfulfilled intentionality. Your ground-state and its intentionality is always there. You can never eliminate the intentionality of your ground-state, it is the one thing you can't lose. And you'll be a split and unfulfilled personality so long as there is anything within you which is at odds or in contradiction to your ground-state and its intentionality. What is your ground-state's intentionality then? This is your *dharma*, what you essentially are, and are, so to speak, meant to be, how you would flourish effortlessly, as the sun shines without trying, or an acorn, if we let it, grows effortlessly into an oak. That is the model of how you could be. Putting this another way, you can never out-perform your ground-state. You will always be unhappy unless you're in it, but when, how you are as an embodied personality is at one with your ground-state, then you find that you grow enormously, expand, flourish.

Mervyn

[Our ground-state is basically, then, our essential human nature—Marx's 'species being', what you called in *Dialectic* 'our core universal human nature'?]

Roy

[Yes, that's right.] When you're in your ground-state does this mean you're free? Well it means there is nothing in you which is a result of your intentionality that is blocking you. But of course there are a lot of other things in the world outside you, which are still blocking you, so you immediately fight to remove them. And

part of that fight will be to aid and empower the struggle of all beings everywhere, to get rid of their heteronomies and those emergent strata, the social forces and entities and systems which are blocks and constraints for us all. Nor am I saying you first become realised and then engage in social action—because at each point you are engaged in social action. I am completely opposed to the idea of the 'beautiful soul', the idea that you can retreat from this world. Let's take an example. If someone has a problem with their jealousy, what good is it their going on a retreat and spending six months working on their jealousy, when there is no one there to be jealous of. They have to work on their jealousy on the site, with the people they're jealous of. We work on ourselves while we're working in the world and this entails a critique of both traditional religiosity and traditional politics. For politics, political action without self-transformation is useless, and believing that you can become a perfect or realised being without acting in this world is delusory.

I think it is important to say here very specifically what we have to lose to become enlightened or realised. First we have to lose our ego, because, being in our ground-state, we would see that our freedoms were indivisible. Secondly, we need to be intellectually more generally mentally clear, that is have no fixations, no prejudices, no preconceptions; in a way everything that we know in-built into our being, so that our minds are as free, clear, empty, flexible and creative as possible. Thirdly, we have to be emotionally clear; and this is a very difficult one to work on because most of us have problems with one or more emotional states, anger, jealousy or whatever. So no ego, a clear mind, a pure heart, and then, fourthly, a healthy and energised body; that is, we need to be as well balanced and healthy as we can. But there's a fifth condition, we need our 'psychic being' to be clear too, that is, free of all traces and residues of the past, which include *karma* from our past in this life and, if we believe in them, our past lives; but also our past in the form of the residues or scars of our experience buried in our unconscious—we need to transform our unconsciousness into consciousness, and, like our *karma*, clear it, release it, let go of it; get totally free of our past. Indeed, you could say that ultimately we need to be free of our genes, our

genetic endowment too. When these five conditions are satisfied we'll be a *realised* being. But it's very important to appreciate we still won't be *free* so long as there is heteronomy outside us which constrains our action; so ultimately we can only be free in activity, only fulfil our ground-state potential in a society in which everyone is free. There is thus a direct link between my own freedom and everyone else's.

Mervyn

Are you partly getting at what Kathryn Dean seems to be getting at in a recent paper[3] when she says:

> dichotomous conceptions of social relations as well as the dichotomies of individual/society and structure/agency are of sociological and therefore political significance only in highly differentiated and contradictory cultures such as that of capitalism. A critical realist account of subjectivity must deconstruct these dichotomies to show that the 'social' is in the strongest sense intra-psychic and that it is the specific 'social' of capitalist cultures which produces the individual/society and structure/agency dichotomies. For this reason, I can't agree with critical realists such as Archer and Bhaskar who insist on maintaining these dichotomies.

I take it that you're now not insisting on maintaining those dichotomies—far from it. You presumably don't agree that the social is just intra-psychic in slave-type societies, but perhaps you envisage that it will be in post-slave ones? You say in *RMR* (p. 113) that social structure is both out there and in here, inherent within us—in post-slave society it will be entirely within us?

Roy

There are two points, the point about critical realism generally and the point that Kathryn Dean is raising. The thing is, I think critical realism is all its five phases as I periodise it, and of course you can break it up in different ways and you can go into the

[3] 'Capitalism, psychic immiseration, and decentred subjectivity', *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture & Society* 5:1, Spring 2000, pp. 41–56.

microstructure of these phases and the different ways in which they could be developed—that is absolutely valid. On the one hand, it's the best account we have of the world of duality. The best account of what we have to get rid of to be realised, to be enlightened, to be free, to be living in an eudaimonistic society. The best account of our obstacles and our blocks.

But there is another side to it, which is the non-dual basis of that world. And this has not been theorised by critical realism. Nor to my knowledge has it been theorised systematically and adequately by any other philosophy. One could, of course, take Vedanta in India. But there would be two things I have to say here. First, the world of duality is not an illusion; it contains illusions, but they are causally efficacious realities which constitute and block the fulfilment of our intrinsic potential. Secondly, Vedanta and other traditions have placed great emphasis on practices such as meditation, and even given the impression that the route to enlightenment is to be achieved through meditation, and that everything else you need, all the other virtues, will flow automatically, so to speak, from good meditation. This gives a very misleading picture. For the point of enlightenment is defined by the shedding from your embodied personality of everything which is inconsistent with your ground-state. As and when you are shedding, you are gradually able to embed your embodied personality in your ground-state, and your personality becomes saturated with the qualities of your ground-state in an unalloyed form; qualities such as love and creativity, which are manifesting and expressing themselves anyway, are now allowed to develop and flourish freer, and your consciousness is suffused with the properties of the transcendental consciousness of your ground-state. As you move into your *dharma*, everything will become for you more effortless, more spontaneous, you will have more energy; tend to get more things right, etc. But you will still be living in the world of duality, and so your *dharma* won't be realised, your freedoms will be impeded by things outside yourself, and your intentionality can't be fulfilled or perfectly expressed. Redefining the goal of enlightenment as shedding focuses on the embodied personality which is what needs changing, transforming. Your ground-state is fine. Of course it's wonderful to have beautiful meditations. They can

energise you and help in many other ways, but what you have to do is become a better, which means clearer, person in the relative phase of existence. Meditation can allow you to access your ground-state, but according to my way of looking at things we're accessing our ground-state all the time. We, that is our embodied personalities, can achieve transcendental identification with our own higher, innermost being, i.e. our ground-state, in meditation, inaction, in removal from active life, but the definition of an enlightened being is someone who is in a non-dual state in the relative phase of existence, that is in ordinary life.

This redefines the goal of enlightenment, and no-one has put it exactly like this before. The goal is to shed everything within your embodied personality which constrains, blocks and gets in the way of your ground-state qualities and hence your feeling of total solidarity with all other beings. In the first instance this solidarity will probably be mainly with other human beings. Of course this doesn't mean that you'll treat each human being in the same way. The way you behave, the way you manifest your unconditional love in relation to other beings, will depend on the concrete singularity of your relation with them; thus if someone had given me their child to look after during this interview I wouldn't treat them in the same way as I'd treat you. Non-judgmentalism is very important here and it goes hand-in-hand with the fact that we all have unique ground-states, concretely singularised, specific *dharmas*. One of the features of the philosophy I'm presenting in this book is that it applies concepts such as dialectical universalisability and concrete singularity, which were initially developed in relation to the relative world of duality, to the absolute world of non-duality, which I'm arguing is its basis and condition of possibility.

So we have this idea of critical realism as being the best account of what we have to get rid of. But then we have to know what sustains it, and that is what the philosophy of metaReality does. So we incorporate, we retain all the critical realist moments. And this is quite in line with my understanding of the history of critical realism, because in the very first phase there was, for example, the idea of laws being tendencies, the transfactuality of laws; that is retained in the second phase and the third and the

fourth and the fifth. You don't give that up, there is still a distinction between the transitive and the intransitive, that doesn't go; it's just that now the distinction between knowledge and being has to be theorised within being, and similarly the world of duality, structured in terms of our concepts of non-identity, has to be inserted within what I call rich concepts of identity. These are differentiated concepts. You see, people have thought of identity as being punctiform and even spiritual philosophers have called it that. Actually, if you are in unity with my words now, or any word, or a television picture, you are in unity with a whole. It is not purictiform, no example of transcendence that I've ever heard of is without differentiation. Similarly with development.

Mervyn

I want to ask why you drop the distinction between union and identity in favour of identity? Why isn't constellational union still the appropriate concept instead of identity? And why doesn't this shift to identity end up leaving you where it left Hegel—unable to sustain real negativity and open totality?

Roy

I do in this book actually use the idea of philosophy of metaReality as being the constellational unity of duality and non-duality.

Mervyn

Sometimes you say identity and sometimes you say unity, previously you would have strictly said unity rather than identity.

Roy

This is a very important point, because when you perform any simple act, for example, read the newspaper, you are in immediate identity. So union is too weak. But unity also has its place because, when we are living in a eudaimonistic society, then we won't be identical. You'll be different from me, but we'll be in unity. Your ground-state is different from mine, that gives you a different *dharma*, a different set of qualities, a different set of potentials, from mine. You will value our diversities. And so we

need concepts of unity as well as identity. Duality is a very important concept for the philosophy of metaReality because it is precisely that which we are trying to eliminate or reduce.

Let me align two sets of distinctions. The distinction between the demi-real, the relative and the absolute; and the distinction between the oppositional or antagonistic dual, the non oppositional (non-antagonistic) dual and the non-dual—and in particular the contrasts between oppositional dualistic activity and non-oppositional dualistic activity and non-dual being. As a realised non-dual being, you will be engaged in oppositional dualistic activity, struggling to eliminate heteronomies and unfreedoms which affect you and exist in the world of which you are a part. When we have a eudaimonistic society, or more generally, cosmos, then there will be no non-dual beings, but you will still be growing and developing, differentiated from other non-dual beings, and still employing dualistic modes of activity, including obviously dualistic thought and discursive language, talking about things, learning about things, etc. As a non-dual being you will recursively embed your new experiences and knowledge into your non-dual being, and as such you will be expanding in an open and, in principle, infinite way. Such a world will still be a relative world in the sense that it will be finite, governed by physical parameters and laws, you will still physically die, etc. And of course you will be engaged in dualistic activity, as part of the process of living and developing and flourishing in a eudaimonistic but relative world. In such a world there will be no demi-real, and no oppositional dualistic activity. But, in the world in which we are living now, the demi-real defines the categorial structure of the relative phase of existence. So you could say that the demi-real dominates the relative and is the form in which the relative dominates or emasculates its absolute or non-dual basis or ground. I hope this clarifies the sense in which the concepts of the demi-real and the relative retain their validity within the philosophy of metaReality.

Mervyn

So we need both identity and union, but does that hinge on this notion of an unmediated connection between minds, direct

mind-to-mind causality? I find that very difficult to accept. I accept that you and I understand each other directly now, but I am very aware that there are all kinds of physical causes going on.

Roy

Certainly there are physical conditions, but in that moment in which you understand me or in that moment at which you follow a play on television there is no separation, no duality, no opposition, but immediate, direct understanding or following or listening, and so on.

Mervyn

There are still many brain states going on here.

Roy

But we're not talking at that level, I'm not arguing that there are not physiological conditions for transcendental identification in consciousness, but in that moment, they are as irrelevant as the weather or the position of the planets in the sky. Let me put it like this. When you're listening, you are not thinking; you're listening. As soon as you start thinking, you are not listening. When you're listening or when you're looking, you're just listening or looking and that's all. When I'm listening to you there is no ego, no duality, no separation, in that moment there is identity and not just unity.

Mervyn

We're not self-conscious of it, we're just doing it.

Roy

That's right. Of course, as an embodied personality you're over there, but notice that the moment you stop focusing, the moment you stop listening, that's when you lose the plot. This applies to whatever we do. So really the most important thing in life is single-pointedness and clarity. And when you are single-pointed and clear then you are in a non-dual state. Now, of course, we can't be in non-dual states all our life, so we have to have a new conception of our being as rich and differentiated, such that

we can—because we all have to—perform non-dual actions. We all have to think, to reflect—is this the right thing to do, do I really understand Japanese, am I really understanding what Kathryn Dean is saying? But I can still be a non-dual being by recursively embedding that within my non-duality, and I am of course performing a dual action.

To answer Kathryn Dean. Once we view our embodied personalities within what I call four-planar social being—this concept was there in *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, but was only really fully developed in *Dialectic*—we have a much richer understanding than that provided by my efforts to transcend dualism and dichotomy in *The Possibility of Naturalism* (*PON*). Some critical realists are still, it seems to me, fighting on the battleground of *PON*; so reconciling and re-articulating the relationship between structure and agency (e.g. against Tony Giddens) is still very important to them—and it is important. But I agree with Kathryn Dean. I think society is in here, and that really makes it a lot easier, it makes the task of transforming society much easier when we realise that what ultimately keeps the whole production line going is our desires, our greed, our vanity, our selfishness in failing to see that there is another way in which we can collectively satisfy our egos.

Mervyn

You want to say society is just in here?

Roy

No, that's why I've got four-planar social being. Actually when we act *in-here*, at the dimension which I call (d), that is of the stratification of our personalities in the conception of four-planar social being, we're also simultaneously acting *out-there*, at all the other dimensions of four-planar social being, that is potentially at the level of our material transactions with nature, at the level of our social interactions with other people and at the level of social structure. And I'm also saying that there is no other way in which we can act: on the one hand, we can't act in-here without acting out-there; and on the other hand, we can't act

out-there save by acting in-here—that's the only point of our agency in the world, we can only act from ourselves, necessarily.

Mervyn

She actually said that society is in the strongest sense within yourself.

Roy

She has made the point that we internalise social forms and I agree with her. The thing is, a master–slave relationship is at once out-there and in-here. One of the things about this philosophy is that, although we inwardise, we don't collapse externality. They didn't understand this in India, because in India there is a long tradition of inwardising everything, uncompensated by retaining or developing adequate conceptions of the outer, the not-self. And this is, in a way, reflected in Indian philosophy, in the very centrality and wonderful ambiguity of the concept of the self, on the basis of which subjectivity spreads outwards to encompass the totality.

As you know, Kant had this dictum that the starry heavens are out-there and the moral law is in-here. I am not too keen on the 'moral law', the ethics here is a virtue-based ethics. But the point I want to make is that the starry heavens are not just up there, they're also in-here, enfolded within us. And they all said, oh, that's great, my starry heaven is different from yours. But hang on a moment, the starry heavens are also out-there. In other words, capitalism is also out-there, it's not just in your head. You have to work on it out-there. Global warming is not just an idea, it is a reality. A reality of course produced largely as a result of the ideas that humanity has had and objectified in its technologies. But still a reality out-there.

Mervyn

As we've seen, you argue that 'realism about transcendence leads into the transcendence of realism itself in a "new, more totalising worldview"' (as is the way with immanent critique). You claim that, in shedding duality, we shed the semiotic triangle, i.e., the

distinction between the signifier and the referent, and the signified and the referent, achieving an immediate identity of meaning and being (reality is immediately meaningful) and of value and being or the sacred and profane (things are intrinsically right or wrong). So we have the re-enchantment or re-spiritualisation of reality. The world is of course always already enchanted—it's just that we denizens of the demi-real don't see it: the modernist ideology of disenchantment, which says there isn't any meaning or value in being, masks it. When we shed the mask, we see, and our powers to see expand. This seems a wonderfully attractive notion for our times, and a very big and bold thought, but I have at least one big problem with it.

It seems to entail that we lose referential detachment and hence the intransitive dimension. Does this mean that in eudaimonia we shed realism itself, retaining it only for the study of the past? What are we left with—presumably not irrealism—just realism about everything as usual, but with everything now in the transitive dimension as 'existence' and 'essence' are brought into line by absolute reason? Such that a generalised hermeneutics and semiotics will provide the appropriate methodologies rather than realism (and you have a brief section on this)? Also, you had previously argued that referential detachment is a necessary condition for specifically human being, so again, are you now saying that it is only applicable regionally? But if it doesn't hold in eudaimonia, how could we even talk about anything? (Existential intransitivity was previously a necessary condition for discourse itself.) Indeed, how could we have anything to say to each other?

Roy

You're absolutely right. Referential detachment and realism will always be there, and that's something I insist on. Because, when we have a eudaimonistic society, we'll want to grow and develop, we won't stop using our minds, we won't stop using language, we won't stop referring to things. Even for me, when we talked about identity and unity a moment ago, I will be physically separate, I will still be an embodied being, and you'll be different

from me both in your ground-state and your physical spatio-temporal distinctness. This will be the end of pre-history. We'll have fantastic challenges, we will want to expand our minds, and we will talk about the basic things without constraint. So it is getting rid of the constraints, everything we do will be consistent with our ground-state, and in a eudaimonistic society every being would be free. Because as long as some being is not free then your intentionality cannot be fulfilled in so far as your intentionality depends on them. This is the most important thing to realise. I don't know a philosophy that has said this in quite the same way, quite so clearly, that when we are in a eudaimonistic society this is the beginning of real challenges and the beginning of real history. We'll use our minds and our linguistic abilities, we'll use our capacity to refer, to much greater effect. I'm not saying we are not embodied personalities. I'm saying underneath and underlying our embodied personality there is something more important, our ground-state. When you get rid of all the blocks within your embodied personality which actually precluded it from growing, and you're only at one with your ground-state, because your ground-state is sustaining it, your embodied personality will then expand, it will soar. So this is very much within the conception that Marx had, and of course we'll always use language, the domain of realism never goes. The domain of referential detachment never goes, but referential detachment is underpinned by non-dual immediate identification, and if we weren't in a non-dual state now we couldn't be talking about anything. This talking about anything is sustained by our talking. And in just talking we are in a non-dual state.

Mervyn

You say, memorably, that the philosophy of metaReality espouses 'a spirituality within the bounds of secularism, consistent with all faiths and no faith'. Is this agnosticism in relation to the existence of god? (You say in one of your lectures that you honestly don't know what lies beyond the cosmic envelope.) Or are god and the divine just metaphors for the cosmic envelope, for the intrinsic cosmic structure of possibility? Or are you saying something

stronger than this, that there's a divine purpose or plan (whose realisation in an open world is however up to us)? But if that's the case, how is it that we have a secularism albeit a spiritual one?

Roy

What I'm saying is that I think I can prove that at the end of the day, whatever you want in life, you have to reach a point of self-consistency with your ground-state, and that will take you to a position where you desire and fight for the self-consistency of all beings with their ground-states, in recognition that every ground-state will be different. And all these ground-states are connected by the cosmic envelope. That ideal is, I think, implicit in all emancipatory projects. You can also find it in all the religious traditions if you look, at least little bits of it. If you take a very transcendent monotheistic religion like Judaism, it's still arguably there in a subtle way. One of the books coming out soon is based on lectures I gave in India recently on comparative religion and spirituality.[4] I think there is a remarkable unity within religious traditions. Religious practices I honestly have got very little sympathy for, but if someone finds a particular religious practice helpful, that's fine. Similarly, if you look at most libertarian or socialist projects, you will see they eventually presuppose something pretty close to the position I am articulating here. So where does god fit into all this? The thing is, if someone wants to say god is the cosmic envelope, that's fine. If someone wants to say, OK, I agree with everything you've said, and I can find this also in my religion, but there is something beyond the cosmic envelope which is the cause or creator of the cosmic envelope, that too is absolutely fine with me. There may well be a cause, and there may not be a cause, the point is really, if you like, this is a minimal programme, a programme on which all people who want to see a eudaimonistic society, or achieve any objective in life, or ensure the survival of the planet, can all agree. And they can still go on being a Muslim, do their five sets of *rakats* a day, or be a Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, or whatever. It doesn't really matter.

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[4] *Beyond East and West*, op. cit.

It follows obviously from what I am talking about here that they shouldn't go around slitting each other's throats, and certain forms of political practice are completely wrong.

Let's take the case of the collapse of actually existing socialism. The immediate producers were never in control, and at some stage, despite the fact that the immediate cause might have been capitalist encirclement at some point, the whole project of transferring power from the bureaucracy to the immediate producers collapsed. At some point the project stopped being that of building a different kind of society and instead became a matter of producing a society which would do capitalistic or consumeristic type things, like build motor cars or go to the moon, better than the Americans. Now while the Soviet bloc was importing a western technology which had a built-in incentive, a monetarised incentive, for creative innovation, they could do far better than the west. And that is why, in the 60s, it looked as if they were going to overtake the west. The first space ship was a Soviet one, and were the Americans worried! The strange thing is that in 1989 the so-called realists in international relations theory, led by people like Kissinger, had persuaded everyone that the Soviet bloc was here to stay. Well, of course, what had happened is that no-one in the Soviet Union really knew how to handle a computer, they were all drunk before eight o'clock in the morning, there was nothing in life for them to live for, except possibly American pop music or a holiday by the Black Sea; at some point, the lie was exposed. There was no source of dynamism intrinsic to the Soviet bloc. Gorbachev tried to produce it, and what a result. He was a really great man, the main effect of it was the opposite, of course, of what he intended. So little creativity, so little love, had been allowed to be expressed under actually existing socialism that those who came through were nearly all westerners—a Russian Orthodox Church fell out of the cupboard, that was the only institution that had somehow kept going. And then, when they got to the west, or the west got to them, they realised that now they were living in a much more insecure society, and they started realising that they had lost many things. The root cause of the collapse was the failure to do the socialist thing, the failure to observe the third thesis on Feuerbach, that if you want to educate

society, if you want to transform society, you have got to educate and transform yourself. That is the basis. We can't just transform an objectified reified social structure without transforming the human beings, and once you transform the human beings, once you unleash their ground-state qualities, you'll find they have tremendous creativity—actually their creativity was manifest in things like chess that were kept going.

Mervyn

Qualities which a modern atheist will think have nothing to do with god or anything like that.

Roy

That's fine by me. The thing is, you could say there is an argument for god that goes like this. If you look at all the parameters etc., they have to be so precisely attuned to each other that it would be the most extraordinary accident. But I don't agree with that argument at all. You could say, for Mervyn to be Mervyn, just imagine what would have to happen. For you to have turned out exactly like you, the chances would be astronomical. In other words, anything that happens in the world is always going to strike you as a miracle, so it's an absolutely absurd argument. For all we know, there may be at a parallel level thousands of universes which are working with other parameters, and we don't know that's not true. So if someone asks me, well, is god up there or not, surely you can tell us, I say really I don't know. All I know is that it is possible and arguable to talk about a level of unity which is perhaps beyond self-realisation and beyond what, to use Christian terms, would be called the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth—that is when everyone's realised, everyone's self-realised, that would be like a communist society, and that's the condition Jesus has in mind when he says, look, I'm going to join my father, you go and establish the kingdom of heaven here on earth. That meant he is becoming god. What would that mean? In secular terms that would mean that it was possible, perhaps, for a human being to become one with the cosmic envelope. At the moment I don't know, but that would be what I call

god-realisation. You can imagine that as an ideal, but it would still be within the bounds of this ontology.

Mervyn

Some critical realists just couldn't accept that.

Roy

That's fine, but it is conceivable that a being can set themselves a task of becoming one with the totality. For having the totality enfolded within them, which I'd say we all do—we all have that potential—we may actually become one with the totality. The totality is implicit, enfolded within us. In principle, we can make what is implicit explicit, and if everything (the totality) is implicit, in principle, we can become the totality or *its* ground-state; that is, we can become one with all elements of the totality which are not inconsistent with the ground of the cosmic totality, the cosmic envelope. We might then conceive god as the *shed* totality, i.e. the totality minus that which does not reflect or fulfil, or that which is in some way inconsistent with, its ground. But it is the argument of *RMR* that everything is in the *process* of becoming one with its ground-state; and this process is inevitable, irresistible and ultimately irreversible. We can only delay the end of unity with our ground-state and, projecting a bit further, the end of unity with the ground of all ground-states (god-realisation); we can never 'surpass' it. We can never do better than our best, but in the end we will and must just be our best.

I would not want to debunk the idea of becoming one with a totality; I don't want to say that's impossible, but we have a long way to go. If it is possible, we would have a long way to go to even start to comprehend it. And if you really ask me, I think if we become self-realised beings we've done very well, but we have to do even better because we have to radically transform the social matrix and the natural matrix in which we live so that we can fulfil our potential and our promise, which depends on everyone else being free, because we are all so interconnected. And I can't see that a spiritual being like Jesus or Buddha or Gandhi would have adopted a different approach. We are actually in

crisis, and it's more important than ever to be socially engaged. As far as I know the Buddha never talked about himself, he didn't tell anyone what *nirvana* was; he said, look, if you go chasing transitory things, if you chase your cravings, you're going to be unsatisfied. There is something beyond that which is open to you, and when you are in that state you can be fully abundant and you won't need anything outside yourself.

I think you were at a talk where I spelt out Eckhart's formulation of the ideal state, which is to 'have nothing, know nothing, want nothing'. What that meant was to be empty of anything in your personality so that it is completely clear, so that it can really expand and grow. Of course at any moment of time you may be learning something, but when you learn it, then it becomes a part of your being and doesn't clutter your mind. This is very important. Let's take education. There is a conflict in educational theory, right at the centre of it, which we all know from our own experience, because teachers say to their students, don't revise before an exam, and students always do. So who is correct? Both are. The ideal would be that you fully knew your subject so you didn't need to revise; but in actuality the student doesn't fully know his subject or is not sufficiently self-confident, so he can't take the chance of not revising. But, really, when you know how to drive a car you don't think twice about it. When I say something about critical realism you probably don't have to think twice about it because you're familiar with it; I don't need to do notes for a critical realist. Now, it's a good idea, before you give a talk, just to warm up. I'm not denying this; when in his prime the long-jump marvel, Carl Lewis, used to just do a few runs a day to keep warm, that was it. We actually had a choice whether to do this interview spontaneously or for me to see the questions, but it is much better to do it spontaneously because everything is holistic. When you're listening to me now, this is holistic, we're at one. Of course, you have got to think about what's happening in terms of the interview that will come out eventually, and is it all going according to form, but it's better than it would have been if I'd seen your questions before, because I'd be thinking, oh, I haven't read that book.

Mervyn

You say we are at one but then what does it mean to say that we actually become each other?

Roy

The extraordinary thing is that, when you understand my words there is no separation, no duality between us, and no ego either, nor does the past come into it, nor the specificities of our bodily differentiations.

Mervyn

In that respect, but there are all sorts of things in which we differ.

Roy

Of course, your kidneys and your brains are distinct from mine. But look at this, if you allow your concentration to slip, if you split your intentionality, then we can't be at one, then you are a divided mind. When you are focused, then you are at one with what you are focusing; it could be playing football, or I could be playing football with myself, when I am totally focused: imagine David Beckham.[5] He is practising his free kicks, there's no one else there, but he's perfectly at one with his activity, and that's how you become proficient at anything. If we want to achieve our potentials as human beings, then we should try and be in that state as much as we can. And that goes for social change. If we want to change the social structure, we should try to be at one with our practice, and of course in unity with our comrades or colleagues. That doesn't mean that we agree about everything, of course not; just at that moment, in that struggle.

Mervyn

I can identify with David Beckham, but I can't play football like him, I can't become David Beckham.

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[5] An English soccer star whose play exemplifies spontaneous right-action. With only a few weeks to go to the soccer World Cup, currently being contested, he famously broke the meta-tarsal bone in his left foot.

Roy

This is interesting. I must just say one thing, the day after he got his injury I went into the newsagent and Tony Blair was saying there is nothing more important in our society than David Beckham's left foot! That's the level of our political leadership! But let's put this the other way around. I don't know whether you'll watch the World Cup on television, but most English people will, they'll be identifying, and they'll be one with David Beckham's right foot, when we're losing 1-0 to Argentina and there are two minutes left to go and this is the last chance really to get back in the game and go through, everyone will be one.

Mervyn

One of the things I personally find truly impressive about the book is the multiple articulation and re-articulation of your system along a range of dimensions, with everything ultimately driven by the central concepts of absence and transcendence, such that we come to see in the end that, as in your system, so in the world of which it is a part and seeks to grasp in thought, everything is in open process and interconnected. All this is nicely resumed in the book, as indeed it has to be, because exposition of transcendence produces an expansion of the critical realist ontology at every one of its moments. The articulation and re-articulation occurs

(i) internally, both diachronically and synchronically, in relation to each of the moments of the MELDA schema;
(ii) externally, in relation to the main moments of the philosophical discourse of modernity and associated socio-economic forms—again proceeding by immanent critique, and contextualising each moment in relation to a world-historical event (this contextualising is something you haven't previously done very much, so it's particularly good to see);
(iii) vertically, in relation to the ground-state properties of will (1M), creativity (2E), love (4D), and fulfilled intentionality or reflexivity (5A);
(iv) mimetically or recapitulatively, in relation to the creative unfolding of being as such (cosmogony) which is in turn reflected in the historical process of self-realisation

(phylogeny, history), and in turn again in the development of the embodied personality and the psychic being (ontogeny and—if reincarnation is true—the odyssey of a soul over many lives). As we 'unfold ourselves in an ever-increasingly universal way', mimicking cosmic creation in cosmic consciousness, so does your system.

I personally find this exhilarating—in the sheer range and interinanimation of its many moments, the system seems to me a thing of great beauty as well as a very handy instrument for understanding and changing the world. But, as you know, systems and grand narratives, like god, have had a bad press of late, and the new book can only add to the concerns of those who take this view because it produces a vast expansion of the previous ontology. What is your response to those who say that you elaborate 'a theory of everything', or that you deconstruct western metaphysics, only to reconstruct it, leading to 'an extreme complication, multiplication, explication' of 'precise and rigorous distinctions';[6] that you yourself are a victim of the speculative illusion which subsumes science into philosophy, if not into mysticism, that you have become a master-scientist or -builder rather than an underlabourer for science?

Roy

Well, if we start at the last point. Supposing I have an enemy I want to defeat; the more I know about him, the more I can become one with him, the more I'll be able to eliminate him. Judgmental rationality is certainly preserved. Supposing you're listening to me, and I'm listening to you, and you have a conception of what the ground-state is and I have a conception, and these conceptions are different—or you have a conception of what truth is and I have a conception and they're different—what's the problem? You're a different human being. If you want to understand my conception, then you should really try and get into me, and at the end of the day, if you don't agree with my conception, that's

[6] Heikki Patomäki, *After International Relations: Critical Realism aud the (Re)construction of World Politics*, Routledge, 2001, p. 6, citing Derrida.

fine. That's absolutely fine. It is up to someone else, and this is where the system bit comes in, because ultimately—extraordinarily enough—life is about consistency, reflexivity. The basic thing that's wrong with Hume is that the moment he says something like, well, it's not more rational to go out of the second floor window than the ground floor, you know that he is not at one with himself. Why? Because he always goes out through the ground floor, and of course he has got a very good reason. Everyone is unique. Marx understood that, and I think probably—well I'm sure—that Jesus and Buddha, and Socrates—other great beings with different systems of thought—they understood that. If you understand that everyone is different, then you don't try and impose your own way of life on them.

That is why I'm very opposed to moral rules as such because, supposing I'm killing someone: to kill can pretty well normally be wrong for all people all of the time, but for some people it may be the only thing they can do now and they'll have to do it. In the famous example in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna, pull yourself together, you are a great archer, be focused on what you have to do and don't worry that you're going to shoot and probably kill your kin. Put that out of your mind. You are here to participate in a war which you have decided is correct, if you wobble you're not going to fire the arrow straight at this heart which is what you've got to do, that is your *dharma*, that is your life. If someone came in here and jumped at you or Andrew with a nasty bat or something, I only hope I'd jump up and stop them. So this is about having the virtue of courage, and that stopping the intruder can be done with love. Afterwards, when the guy had calmed down, if the context was right, we might get talking and I might ask what was bugging him. He might tell me that he is having a problem with his wife, then I try and get into him and help him and hopefully he will never do that again. But just in that moment I have to act like that.

Let's take Kant's categorial imperative. If you say something like never tell a lie, according to Kant, this is only right if you can universalise it. I might say to Kant, well look, I want to tell a white lie—suppose someone's had a haircut, had all their hair shaved off and they looked terrible and they say, 'don't I look

great?' I say, 'yes', because there is no way they can put their hair back on, that's a white lie. According to Kant if you accept that once, then the whole system breaks down. Because we would be telling lies the whole time. But that's absolutely not true. There would be a good reason for telling that lie, intuitively that is why we call it 'white'. A good reason which certainly would not vitiate the fact that one normally wants to know and tell the truth. But even this is not so simple. For how you tell the truth depends on who you're talking to. The truth for you is going to be more subtle, more sophisticated than for someone who doesn't know as much. At any level one has got to accept that everything has to be concretely singularised. What is virtuous for you now depends on where you are in your embodied personality, and at the end of the day we want your embodied personality to be completely in line with your ground-state so that you can achieve, fulfil, any objective you want in life. And you will. Those objectives will be such that they will basically be creative and loving, you will be a wonderfully expanded personality. But you will be different from me because you are a different human being.

Mervyn

That's fine, but there are social constraints and impediments—not just at the level of the concretely singular, but the general; one of the best lines you ever wrote I think was when you said 'capitalism is founded on a lie', but when you get to that kind of assertion, how is that reconciled with epistemic relativism, with you saying in effect, well, it's only a provisional opinion given where we're at in history? What some critical realists seem worried about is that if people take 'capitalism is founded on a lie' at face value, then people will react really confidently on that, and this gets us into absolutism and non-relativism; that's what the issue is in concrete terms.

Roy

The thing *is* capitalism is founded on a lie, and we must transform it. I think it is obvious and demonstrable that we can't have a truly spiritual or fulfilling or eudaimonistic society with it—or even a society at one, consistent (organically, dialectically,

developmentally) with itself. Note once more the importance of reflexivity, the unity of theory and practice. And importantly unity between the idea of *consistency*—rich, differentiated, developing, organic consistency—and *clarity*, in the sense of being clear and unconstrained by anything at any level of one's being inconsistent with what one most essentially is; and between consistency, clarity and *commitment* to total transformation, transformation of the totality, the whole.

The idea of truly spiritual consistent modes of existence, or a eudaimonistic society, or even self-realisation or fulfilment, with capitalism is rubbish. Now, you *can* work towards being a totally cleared being in society, now as you are, and you can become a realised being despite capitalism, but you can't fulfil your intentionality, you will never fulfil your potentiality. And because you are realised and clear you will be struggling really powerfully, not necessarily in the conventional ways, to undermine that system. There is no way that we can have eudaimonia, there is no way that even a single individual can fulfil their intentionality, achieve the fulfilment of the ground-state qualities, in our existing system. We are not monads, and for me or you to achieve our potential, everyone has to be free. We have to stop the planet going down the plug, no more 9/11's, no more follow ups to 9/11. I am not making a particular political point, but no more chronic Third World debt; it has all got to go, total transformation. I would argue that I am on the Left, that I have always been on the Left, and I do not cease to be on the Left, but we have to think through a lot of our political practices much more radically. And actually, once we understand this spiritual dimension which is there within Marxism, we have a good basis to build on—emancipatory thought which is there actually within the practices as well but was not allowed to be completed; in other words there was great heroism, the Stakhonovites were fantastic, they were truly heroes and probably the whole system can only keep going because of the kind of selfless love and solidarity that they have. But it was in terms of the lie, it was in terms of the lie that they were building socialism. That lie was exposed. The lie of capitalism will be exposed. People will see it, people will walk away. They will. I am much more optimistic in a peculiar way than I

was a few years ago, just because of the history of revolutions; every revolution has been unpredicted and a kind of spontaneous mechanism, a spontaneous seeing through: ah, there's a deeper level, we don't have to do this, to keep well we don't have to have capitalism! Sooner or later people will know this.

Mervyn

One of the concerns within the movement is that people find it very difficult to understand or accept your notion of ontological or alethic truth and morality, such that you can be so sure of the truth of your positions.

Roy

One of the things would be this. I say that, when Newton discovered gravity, he became one with the alethic truth of gravity, and that is an extraordinary thing to say; he was in transcendental identification, if you like, with gravity. Nowadays, when we learn the theory of gravity, we find it very easy, that it is actually within us. It was actually within him then, but given where critical science was, it was a great effort by a great mind to reach it. This may sound a little bit Trotskyist, but we are all standing on Newton's shoulders. Everyone knows that once a discovery has been made, it becomes much easier for other people to re-discover it, re-create it, make it their own. Thus it is much easier for children to use computers than it is for their parents. There is a species-specific learning, culture-specific learning. These are some of the things we all intuitively know, which the theory of co-presence can begin to help explain.

So gravity is part of our common sense now, it is an alethic truth enfolded within us, but which has been so awakened and utilised by humanity for the generations following the moment in which for the first time Newton became gravity, that gravity is something that we can all become, quite easily, when we learn it. And this is what we mean by saying that gravity is part of our common sense now.

Mervyn

One day we will see things differently again.

Roy

There is nothing wrong if every student has a slightly different conception of gravity as long as they understand basically what it is, that is absolutely fine. If you put it in the context of their total epistemic package, their take on gravity may always be slightly different from everyone else's. I don't see a problem there. It's like we can communicate in English and we've agreed that we have to be one for each other to understand what we're saying. Your understanding of what I'm saying may, in your total context, be different from what I'm saying. It doesn't matter. In that moment we understand. When you go home—I'm not saying this will happen, because I think our understanding is pretty close—at the end of the day, if your take on this conversation is a certain way, and my take on it is another way, you go on, you be free, and we have had a great conversation. Because I know this interview is intended for critical realists, let me say people have often asked me which is correct: books like Andrew Collier's or William Outhwaite's? And that is what a deep idea should do, it should have infinite possibilities for development. So I don't want us all to be the same epistemically, any more than in terms of all our other qualities.

Mervyn

But this is bound up with ontological diversity and pluralism?

Roy

There are two aspects to this. If we go a little bit beyond reality to the ideal of truth, then the alethic concept of truth, you can say, how could it not be valid—how could we live in a world which was not constituted by truths? What would we be doing? Such a world would be a subjectivist—a huge subjectivist—illusion. It would mean, really, that there would be no constraint, either within me, or outside me, or on me doing anything. As soon as you introduce the idea of a constraint on your potentiality you have to have the idea of alethic truth, that that constraint is truly a constraint on your potentiality. In other words it is truly a constraint. And then you have to have a theory of that constraint, and then a theory of getting rid of that constraint, and then a

theory of what you are and why you are constrained like that, and I'm saying we are all essentially unique bundles of intelligence, creativity, love, capacity for right-action. All different. In Bengal they never identify two tigers that are exactly the same. We are like that. That does not mean we can't be one. The development of your individuality is just as much an objective as the development of my own.

Mervyn

It is perhaps unfortunate that this has all become obscured by the dominance of an extreme form of epistemic relativism today.

Roy

That's right. The truth of things is that there has to be real truth, there has to be alethic truth, otherwise we'd already be empowered, we could do whatever we wanted to do; but of course we can't, we're blocked, we're constrained, we're confused, and we have to get rid of that. The very important point is that, when you've got rid of it, there will still be truth, there will be endless truths for us to discover, we won't give up on truth, on language, realism will still be there, there will still be a place for all the theorems of critical realism. It is that we will have got rid of all the blocks and constraints within ourselves and the major blocks within society, which we ourselves produce and sustain, such as capitalism, and all the otter terrible forms which can all be analysed in terms of master–slave relationships. But the biggest master–slave aspects of it are those we carry within ourselves.

The thing about systems is that it is fine for people not to have a system if they don't like it.

Mervyn

Many people nowadays are very suspicious of philosophical systems.

Roy

If someone understands that, really, they can only achieve anything in life by being clear and focused, and that ultimately they won't get anywhere unless they come into consistency with their

ground-state; if they're listening to what I'm saying or looking at something or doing something and doing it clearly, then they will reach a point at which they will be fighting for the freedom of everyone else, all other beings. And then they do not understand ontology in their heads but they do in their action, and that is fine. My idea of a philosophically enlightened being is consistent with someone who does not read, who has never read any of my books; if he's acting in this way, that's fine, brilliant. But of course you and I are living in a very intellectualised world in which we are all engaged, you can see that, particularly academics, we all have a system. Derrida has a system, Foucault has a system, I don't know a single academic who doesn't have a system. They may have the most rotten confused system, that is the whole point. If you're going to be an academic, if you're going to be an intellectual, you get the best system, you get the most coherent system—you get a system, unlike Hume, that you can live with. You can't live with Derrida's system: *il n'y a pas de hors-texte* (there's nothing outside the text). What does this mean? Oh, of course! It's just a metaphor. Why do you need that way of saying things? You don't. And now Derrida has discovered religions, he has discovered god, he discovered Marx a few years ago—that was a bit late wasn't it!

Mervyn

Some people who read *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* would wonder how you would make sense of what you were doing before that.

Roy

Everything is interconnected. As I understand the history of critical realism, it started off by trying to rectify absences within existing problematics, the glaring absence of the concept of being at the time I wrote *A Realist Theory of Science*. Then from that moment on it was engaged in a double dialectic, because it was engaged with things outside itself but at the same time was in the process of self-transcendence, until you go to the time of *Dialectic*; and there I had to say well, sorry, I've left out something—actually I was working on the concept of negation and absence

for ten years before I got on top of it—and that is determinate absence, and that is what drives dialectic on, and now I can make sense of everything I've been doing, and now I can make sense of the possibility of human progress. And then, of course, everything since then does fall into a dialectical schema, and that takes you right through to the realm of non-duality. I might have stuck at a very primitive level of non-duality, and thought, oh, this is fantastic, I've discovered that non-duality is absolutely central to human life and existence; and then someone would say; does that mean it is absolute in the sense that you can't go any further, and how can my non-duality be any different from your non-duality? So then I had to say, this non-duality is rich, differentiated and developing, and your non-duality can be different from mine, and that is fine. Then that also involves the critique of identity. So if I had just accepted an empiricist's or an absolute idealist's concept of identity and identification and unity, that would have been terrible. So now we have got a new kind of identity theory.

Mervyn

You need to spell that out in print somewhere.

Roy

This level of identification is only part of the social story. The greater part of it is difference, non-identity; but it is underpinned by identification. But even identification gives the wrong model unless you have a new concept of identity; a new concept which is rich, differentiated. You see, practically everyone thinks of transcendental consciousness as being empty, but actually when you are in transcendental identity or union with something like some music, it is fantastically rich and complex. You are one with it, but you are one with a tremendously complex whole, and even when you're listening to my words, or I am listening to your questions, I am at one with a tremendously rich complex whole. We have had arduous preparation for this, you can say that the whole of our life has been building up to this! This is a nice point, you see, this is an example of synchronicity, because I just said something which sounds very mystical. You asked about science and mysticism. Now the characteristic feature of the mystical

experience is its non-duality. People achieve or think they become one with god or maybe a saint, maybe Jesus or whatever, it doesn't matter. In the more classical eastern traditions, take Hinduism, they become one with something very abstract, or at the same time they can worship and become one, they are really devoted to Krishna and at the same time they are one with Brahman, which is an abstract absolute. So again I do not see a contradiction or difference here, but the characteristic of the mystical experience is normally understood as being—probably you have to add this here—non-dual identification with something to do with the sublime. Now everything you do in science involves single-pointedness and clarity. The moments of greatest inspiration in science, when we're not thinking inductively or deductively, we suddenly have, on the basis that we've already worked for, an idea from nowhere—that is the stroke of creative genius.

Mervyn

Why do you say that ideas come from nowhere?

Roy

Well you see a new theory, a new concept, can't be induced or deduced, because if you could take the canons . . .

Mervyn

Imagination?

Roy

Yes, that's fine. So the imagination, where does the imagination come from? Where does the truly innovative, imaginative idea in the imagination come from? Where does the beauty in the metaphor come from? When I say something really poetic, something really magical—'as light as rain', that's a cliché, but probably in a particular context it might be beautiful. Where does it come from? If you said 'as light as rain' in the streets of Delhi or Kolkata, they would know what you mean.

Mervyn

They would have experienced it, would have felt it.

Roy

Yes, it is over 40 degrees centigrade. OK, but just in that context it was a new idea. I don't know where it came from, you never know where it comes from. The most wonderful thing in life, particularly if you're intellectual and a scientist, is that you do all your thinking, all your experimenting—you read, you work, you study, and then you *un*think, you suspend thought—and then it happens. That's when it happens.

Mervyn

A new idea then comes from the beyond, beyond the given and beyond the immanent?

Roy

Yes, but it only comes if you've done all your homework. So it's like a reward. Some people don't have to work very hard for this reward. Consider Mozart. We have all seen *Amadeus*, so we know that everyone would be enormously jealous of him, but think of creative minds at school, they're squashed. Really, we all know that there is a real problem, the individual child has to be nurtured and probably we're all potential Mozarts. There was something flukey, some wonderful combination there, but we can all be Mozarts in our own domain, that is what I truly believe. Or take Schubert—Schubert was so prolific that he could never afford the paper to write, so when he went to a restaurant he wrote on the serviettes. Where did it come from?

Mervyn

Basically the scientist and the artist and the mystic are doing the same thing?

Roy

Exactly, the scientist is a mystic. . .

Mervyn

A practical mystic?

Roy

Absolutely. Someone who sets out to be non-dual just to be a mystic without being practical will never be a mystic—they will be a parasite on the rest of society. It is a wonderful thing to go out as a Buddhist monk with your begging bowl, we all understand that, and at the end of the day, if you don't get any food, well, that's part of the culture and you won't grumble, and then you're a non-dual being. But basically we're talking about a bygone era; you can't be religious, you can't be spiritual, without being engaged in the world today.

Mervyn

So the scientists are practical mystics, but nonetheless you yourself say that philosophy needs to be consistent with science in the long run. There's mysticism and mysticism, for instance, the 'anything goes' mysticism. How is this emphasis on the mystical moment in science consistent with your early emphasis on science and the underlabouring role of philosophy?

Roy

Science has very strict protocols, so your mystical experience has to be communicable to other people, and if you suddenly see DNA in a particular way for that to be scientifically valuable, it has to be insertable within the problem field. There are people who have analysed ancient Vedic texts; you can do the same thing with Ancient Egypt in terms of numbers. They have a fantastic understanding of numbers. But the point is, to stick with the Vedas for a moment, they knew that there were other planets beyond Saturn, and they knew what atomic structure was, but there was no-one to communicate this to. I'm not sure actually whether that's true or false, but science is an institution in which you have to be able to communicate your truth, and it has to be consistent with what is already known. Now what is 'already known' may contain a lot of false things. So it does not mean that the totality as it is constituted now is right, it may be completely wrong, and your little insight may be only half a per cent of what counts as knowledge and that may be right, and the 99 per cent may be wrong. However, you are not going to get anywhere in

science unless you make an effort to gradually pull the rest of it into shape. You go with your half per cent, and you try and get it consistent with 5 per cent, then you get some funds and you're able to go on, 10 per cent, 15 per cent, and I daresay revolutionary thinkers like Freud—the Freudian programme, the Darwinian programme—all started like that, this guy is crazy, then gradually, gradually it became an orthodoxy. Everything has to be consistent at the end, because if there is a weakness, a flaw anywhere, then it is going to crack. It's like we can't have a eudaimonistic society so long as we have terrible social systems such as we do now, which oppress women, which oppress workers. Let us be very clear, oppressing workers is oppressing everyone. And oppressing women is oppressing everyone.

Mervyn

What some critical realists also want to know is: you started out with an emphasis on science and on the role of philosophy as an underlabourer for science, and being opposed to pure philosophy, in particular what you call the speculative illusion, now you're no longer just doing philosophical underlabouring.

Roy

Yes and no. At that time when I was stressing the underlabouring work, I always said that we can be critical of the practice of the scientist, but in terms of my philosophical ontology: so we can see that the socio-psychological analysis of science was not being scientific. Now it is actually not being scientific to suppress human creativity even in science. This does not mean that we go back to Feyerabend or anything like that. Science has probably developed very good protocols, and it is our understanding of science that has to be transformed. Actually scientists rarely think in accordance with the canons of formal logic; they only think logically when they have to prove a theorem on a blackboard or write up a research book, otherwise they are always thinking dialectically. Now the vital component of the process of dialectic is this transcendental moment, or rather the moment of transcendence in the transcendental moment, when a new concept emerges, irrupts, containing the seeds of a whole new theoretical

worldview—and that moment cannot be described in accordance with any set of dialectical rules, techniques or tricks: it just happens.

So this, if you like, is inserting a transcendental moment into the dialectical process which is science and philosophy, and at the end of the day it all has to come together. At the end of the day you will see artistic inspiration in science, and you will see scientific endeavour in art, a lot of our dualism will completely have to go. Now to make sense of this intellectually you do need ontology. If you want to call that a system, everything has to fit together. But it is an organic whole—it is not a formal logical whole, it is not a system in the bad sense—it is more like an acorn growing into an oak. That it's the only kind of consistency I believe in. So critical realism, up to and going into the philosophy of metaReality, is a whole, it is a gradually developing tree. And there are further branches.

What I wanted to say, really, is that this has very radical implications, because (talking about truth) the old traditions of religious and political practice were all based on the fact that the leaders or authorities possessed the truth. There was a certain caste, there were priests who knew the truth, and you had to go to the priests, or to the political leaders, who were there to tell you what to do. Well, now I'm saying, actually we don't need those mediators, we can all be in touch with our ground-state, no one owns the truth. These are very radical positions in terms of the history of politics and in terms of the history of religion. At the beginning of *RMR* I cite a little paean to, not so much the ordinary man, but what we are all ordinarily able to do in our everyday life. Just realise how wonderful it is. And then the task of doing exceptional things won't seem so extraordinary. When we realise how brilliant we are. Take how brilliant women are in the domestic sphere at bringing up kids. In this respect, men have to be as women, even in their daily life. It is really an extraordinary thing, but women's domestic labour is uncommodified—that is a mark of demerit in our society. But it is spontaneous, unconditional, holistic, it has many aspects which actually prefigure the sort of society I want to see. So this is very characteristic of dialectical progress. You can sometimes find something

which looks very backward that is really radically progressive. Many feminists will say, well yes, there was a great campaign about twenty years ago that domestic labour should be paid, it's fizzled out now I think. But actually, that paradigm is there, that non-commodified role is there—formally within the reproduction of labour power through domestic labour—but actually it is there sustaining all the other commodified roles.

Mervyn

That's necessarily true.

Roy

Absolutely necessary too. Spontaneous, unconditional, effortless, it couldn't be otherwise. And that is a ground-state quality. It is just that most of us are also paid for what we do, and we forget about all the things that we do freely and give freely, and actually, when you look at it, we only need to eat so much and we can function. It is an extraordinary thing, because we think we can't function without a system, but actually the system only functions because of us. We keep the money system going. Development economists have found that contracts in the Third World never work, never clinch in the market, they are always done as a result of negotiations outside the market, so you do not have the invisible hand of the market, you have the visible, or almost visible, handshake. That is how the money system works. The money system does not work according to the rules that economics describes. It works as a result of informal social transactions. Take great moments in history or great opportunities that have passed by. There are lots of ways of interpreting what went on in France in 1968, but there was a month when De Gaulle was ready to abdicate. He was waiting, the students were waiting for the Communist Party to take power. But although the workers and students were actually in control of the streets, nothing happened, no-one took power, because they all thought that someone had to take power. But being actually in control, they could have kept production going without waiting for the Communist Party. And of course the Communist Party, true to the spirit of Yalta, did not take power. So after a month De Gaulle shrugged his shoulders

and it was back to business. But that was a wonderful opportunity, and such will occur again. I think the so-called problem of social regulation is not really a problem. Because actually social regulation only occurs in virtue of the *unregulated*, free, spontaneous realm of activity, which can do very well without the regulated bit.

Part Four

Explorations within the Philosophy of MetaReality

Chapter Eleven

Educating the Educators—Or, Empowering Teachers*

Roy Bhaskar is a very well-known philosopher who founded the theory of critical realism, an internationally acclaimed theory. Roy Bhaskar wrote his first book when he was in his twenties and he will share with us his reactions at that first time. There is a long list of books he has written, starting with philosophy of science, including discourses on social science, Marxism, emancipation and many other topics. In due course we will all get a chance to get to know Roy today. I think it is really fortunate that we have Roy with us. In one sense it is nice to have a well known philosopher, who has combined east and west, who has challenged many theories to celebrate the anniversary of our foundation. But in another sense it is also nice to have him as someone who shares our concerns. I have not only asked him because he is a Professor, who is used to talking to academics and giving very many lectures over the world; but also because he has his own radical views about education and experiences of them which we would like him to share with us today. When he asked me whether I wanted to work with him, I asked him whether I had to take an exam before he appointed me—and I asked him what the criteria were for passing the test. But

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* Talk on the seventh anniversary of the foundation of the Rewachand Bhojwani Academy, Pune, 17 February 2002.

he asked me what I thought he should be doing. I told him that we want more complete, more down to earth theories, and in his own famous new concepts such as ground-state and cosmic envelope, we are getting that closeness to practical concerns which I feel now we need.

First of all I must congratulate you all on seven years of a wonderful radical achievement. I have known Lakshmi for about fifteen months and I know this school is very important to her. I know it is set up on very radical principles and I have read the brochure, met some of the products, and they are lovely—the products, not the brochure, though the brochure is lovely as well! I am very honoured to be here on this auspicious occasion. With this lovely grouping here, I would like to say only a very few words, indeed I would prefer us just to have a discussion. However I also know that I would not be doing my duty if I did only that.

I suppose you could say what I am going to try to do now is to talk about education and my experiences and your experiences. I want to bear in mind this thought, a very timely thought, that Marx had when he asked—in his third thesis on Feuerbach—who is going to educate the educators, who is going to empower them, who is going to traulsform them? And when you look at the practice of actually existing communist parties we can see that the leadership had not transformed themselves, that the educators, the so-called educators or the would-be transformers had not educated, transformed and changed themselves. So in a way this is a very good lead into my own talk today because what I want to talk about is a kind of dialectic between self-change, self-transformation which you can say is a typical eastern approach, if you like a typically spiritual approach, in which the emphasis is on self-change, self-development and self-improvement (or perfection), and the western approach, in which the emphasis is on change outside the self, transformation in the rest of the world. It is typically this-worldly rather than other-worldly; it is at its best altruistic, outward going, concerned with doing things for other people rather than the self which remains unexamined and so unchanged.

Now actually I think there is no inconsistency between these two approaches. I think that if you are truly spiritual, if you really

have no ego, if you really love other people, then you must be engaged in activities of practical transformation in the world. So real spirituality for me is what I call practical mysticism. That is very down to earth, and that is entirely engaged in putting yourself in the service of the cause of human emancipation, in fact universal self-realisation. That is the only spiritual approach that I can see is truly spiritual, that is of course the approach of all the great spiritual teachers. If you look at Jesus, Buddha, it does not matter. But it is also interestingly enough the approach which is implicit in western and secular theories of emancipation. Now if you take the ideal from Mahayana Buddhism of the Bodhisattva, he may be the most realised human being but he will postpone his own enlightenment, his own bliss, his own *nirvana* until the realisation of every other being in the world. That is very similar to the standpoint of Marx—and Marx was an atheist—when he said that in a communist society the free development of each would be the condition of the free development of all. In other words, your well being, your flourishing was the condition for my own. It was as important to me as mine. In other words, it is no good my being free, it is no good my being the most fantastically improved and perfect person, if you are still miserable and unhappy. That is also precisely the standpoint of Buddhism. And if you go into it deeply enough, at some level, this is the standpoint of all great religious and also even political inspirations and aspirations. So that is where I am coming from, that really there is no contradiction between spirituality and radical social change. No contradiction between self-improvement and therefore education in the broad sense and commitment to transformation of social structures and the emancipation of all.

Once you get to that point where you feel that you are really oriented in your life to collective human emancipation, ultimately universal self-realisation, then you want to know, where does this outcome come from, how do we bring it about? The thing is, the really important thing to understand is, that you can never emancipate anyone else. Emancipation cannot be imposed from without, emancipation always comes from within. So you are going to, go through a dialectic. How does this exactly work out? Starting say from a spiritual inspiration, you want to have a political

experience, you want to be in this consciousness that will take you to commitment to radical social change. Then when you are committed to radical social change you will ask yourself, how do you change people, and you will find that any attempt to force emancipation from outside is false, it is heteronomous and it will not work. Only individuals themselves can free themselves, emancipation cannot be imposed from without. All the failures of utopian projects, secular projects of emancipation come down to not taking seriously enough the principle of self-referentiality. This is very important for education, to sketch out this dialectic of spiritual development and radical social transformation.

Let us come back to the point that nothing happens without the individual. We are all involved in education, most of you are teachers or counsellors, so how do you actually teach some one something. Have you thought about this? Supposing I write a proof in logic or mathematics on the board and I say, well, you see if p implies q and p therefore q, do people understand that? If you do not understand that then you have to invoke a meta-theory quid you have to deduce that theory from another theory.[1] If you do not understand what I am saying then my effort at teaching is hopeless, useless. At the end of the day teaching, which is a dialogical relationship, always depends on the subject gaining a new perspective, just at the point he/she gets it, 'ah now I see how you do it'. This is true even of applied skills like learning to drive a car. A lot of people who start to drive do not know how to reverse, they do not know which way to turn the wheel. It is difficult, but suddenly you get the hang of it, or suddenly you get the hang of how you speak French. If you are looking at a painting, all now, I thought it was a duck now I can see it as a rabbit. This is the gestalt involved in all acts of learning and education. Without that you cannot teach anyone anything at all. So it is always the self, the subject who has to understand. You cannot impose understanding on them, they have to bring from within.

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[1] You have to say for example, if P implies Q, and P then Q; and P therefore (because if P implies Q and P then Q), Q. Does this help?

So what is the condition of this, it is an extraordinary condition. The condition is it means they must already know it. Because if it comes from within they must already have the knowledge and this is in fact nothing other than Plato's theory that all education is anamnesis, that what you are doing is bringing out something that was implicit, enfolded, potential within them, you are actualising it, making it explicit, but unless it was there, you could not have that 'ah', that 'I see it', that *coming together* when the pupil understands what the teacher is trying to say. So the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality is not only important for emancipation, it is just as important for education, which is our main theme today.

Once you see how important it is, then you can say how do I get these people who are just where they are, who are maybe concerned with the little things, nothing to do with collective emancipation, nothing to do with making the world a better place, how do we get them there. So we come to another level of our dialectic, at this level you can see that any objective, it does not matter how stuck a person is in life, if they want to fulfil that objective there is only one route. The one route is single-pointedness or clarity, coherence and purity. Most failures in life at any level stem from confusion, stem from not being clear about what you want. So supposing a robber wants to rob a bank, and you are his counsellor. The first thing to tell him is to be clear about what he wants to do—tell me, what do you want to do; rob a bank, then if he is single-minded about it, fine; but then you might want to say to him, why do you want to rob a bank, do you think it will really make you rich. Then you can take it back a step further, at whatever point you take it to, the criterion for successful action, the criterion for achieving your goal in life is single-pointedness, clarity, coherence and purity.

Now wherever you start, as you become more coherent, clear, pure in your mental, emotional and physical being, then you will find you start to manifest some beautiful qualities. These are the qualities that Lakshmi referred to, which I call the ground-state qualities of human beings. These are qualities of freedom, qualities of endless creativity, these are qualities of love, right-action, these are qualities that fulfil intentionality and without

these qualities the extraordinary thing is that we could not do anything at all. And you might say this is very extraordinary: are you telling me that under all this mess, and tremendous confusion, all this sort of bundle of compromises that we are, there is nothing other than pure creativity, pure energy, love, freedom and even knowingness? Yes, that is what I am claiming.

Let us first of all make this consistent with some themes in secular thought and then let us look at it in our own way. Just to say this is not my idea, if you look deep enough every theory of emancipation, every theory of realisation makes this claim, that ultimately human beings are fine, they are absolutely fine, there is nothing wrong with them, they are beautiful. Even in their individuality, especially in their individuality—for no two human beings are the same. We all have a unique *dharma*, we are all very special. But we are all absolutely fine. Some people have even said that we are all enlightened already. It is only this mess that we have on top of it which stops us from realising our enlightenment.

Anyway, coming from the west, Rousseau said, we are born free but everywhere are in chains. What he meant was that the human essence is such that we are free, that we imprison ourselves, or rather the society which we sustain (and are ultimately responsible for) imprisons us. Chomsky, the great contemporary linguist, says that we have at birth the innate capacity to learn any language, the capacity to generate an infinite number of sentences, no matter how few sentences most people may actually generate. We have the capacity of endless creativity. If we were sitting here in Japan we would not be talking in English, we would not be taking in Hindi, we would not be talking in Marathi, we would be talking in Japanese. We all have that gift, that capacity at birth. What I would say is you take a social phenomenon, say drudgery in the office or on the shop floor—these are male examples, we will come to typical female examples—on the factory floor, how could a production line, the most uncreative, the most alienating, how could that keep going for a moment without the spontaneous ingenuity of the workers on the production line. Even an office could not keep functioning if you only observed the rules. You have to show spontaneity, ingenuity to keep even the most mechanical systems going. How do you get your computer

going? You give it a little kick: if it gets naughty, then you just have to put it in its place.

Or if you take a social development like war, what could be more horrendous then war, but how is a war sustained? At the end of the day, it is sustained by the selfless solidarity of soldiers at the front, the support, sustenance and love of their sisters, wives, daughters back home. How is even that bank robbed: without that solidarity, that trust between the robbers, the action would not be successful. But there is also a further point. How could you do anything in life unless you did something right. Whatever I am doing, whether I am convincing you of my argument or not, I am at least uttering some words correctly, that is a right-action. So what I would do is challenge you to find any human situation which does not repose on these ground-state qualities of freedom, creativity, love, right-action or fulfilment of intentionality. These are the bedrock qualities of human beings.

What I want to say is that the project of education, the project of enlightenment, and the project of universal self-realisation are all the same, or all turn on a single matter, and this turns on eliminating the heteronomy, eliminating everything which is not essentially you. And in that process of eliminating everything which is not essentially you, you will automatically be working towards the elimination of everything which is not essentially everyone else. This is not an individualistic approach, because it presupposes what I call, and this is one of the few technical concepts I will use here, four-planar social being. It presupposes that every event in social life has to be understood in terms of four dimensions. In terms of our natural exchanges, our material transactions with nature; in terms of our social interactions with others; then in terms of our relationships with the social structure. What is the social structure? Social structures are things like languages, economies, political forms. Clearly we do not create them at birth, we inherit them, but we play a vital role in their reproduction. Because what we do, and what they could not exist without, is our intentional activity. And it is in virtue of our conscious intentional activity that social structures, unwittingly, are more or less reproduced or transformed. For example, take the social structure of capitalism, or commercialism, call it what you like.

How could this function for a moment without greed, without desire? You go to the west, to America, go to Europe, England, it is not sufficient to have one car, you have to have one car per person—it is not sufficient to have one car, you have to have two or three, or as many as four, five and six! And the result is that where I live, or mainly live, around England and south east England the roads are congested. Two people, next-door neighbours, will both drive a car to work, instead of doing the sensible thing which is to share. They may work in next-door offices, and may even park their cars next to each other—though they will have tremendous trouble parking and it will take them a long time.

Now let us consider the impact of the social structure on the fourth dimension of four-planar social being, which is the stratification of our personalities. What is it doing, it is making us irritable, bad tempered, this reproducing of a structure which can only produce more and more of the same. Radical innovation, innovation for qualitative change, innovation which takes into account internal relationships, external economies, qualitative, non-quantitative considerations which pay attention to the environment—this kind of innovation, our social system knows nothing about. Then consider its impact on the second dimension of four-planar social being, it is spoiling our relations with each other. Because after you have spent ten or twelve hours in your office and in your car and then go back home and there is your wife or husband whom you immediately have a row with and then your children get upset and then you hit your children or something even worse and then you feel terrible, then you sulk, and then you wake up with a headache and the endless cycle repeats itself. So all these four dimensions of social life interact.

The question really is not where do we start, because what most people who do not really understand this kind of spiritual approach properly think that the spiritual being is not doing anything. Now this may have been appropriate in a different time and age, and perhaps there is still a role for some beings to not be in society, but I would argue that we have to say that today everyone has to be in society because we are globally interconnected, we are in global crisis. We are fast reaching a point of no return. We are like a car that has lost control and heading towards a cliff,

we are five feet away from the cliff, we are travelling at 50 mph and we have got five seconds to make the change. It is like that. The height of Bangladesh is four feet above sea level. This is a terrible thing for in twenty-five to thirty years it will not be there, nor will any of the islands in the world and England too will look very different. The rate at which global warming is proceeding is so rapid that we have to do something about it now. But not just that, take our interactions with each other, and the way we reproduce the surface structure. And without going into rights and wrongs, we now know, after the events of 11 September, how the actions of a few people could destabilise the whole of the world. And then a few actions of politicians and political leaders who accentuate this destabilising. At a political level we are in a terrible state. At an economic level there is chronic debt, chronic Third World debt, chronic crisis, and yet we are living on a planet of abundance. We have potentially everything we need. So whatever the merits of going to a retreat, or going into a monastery in the old days, today to be a spiritual being, to be concerned with the realisation of the divine on earth, you have to be a practical being, and you have to participate in society. And that means willy-nilly, that *whatever you do, you will be acting on all these four fronts simultaneously.*

Whether you like it or not you will be engaged in a process of social change. Either repetition and reproduction or transformation and change. Because everything that happens in society happens only in virtue of intentional agency. Intentionality is irreducible; agency is irreducible; agency at all these four dimensions of planes and effects is irreducible; so whatever you do is going to affect the world in this multidimensional way. But then also, you cannot not act. You must act. If you abstain from acting, that too is an action is it not? That is an action, that is a choice. Also at the end of the day you will have to act spontaneously, at some point you will act spontaneously. This is very important. If you just imagine that you are trying to do something. Supposing I am trying to pick up this glass of water. Well, I might think what is the most elegant way to do this. I can do it this way or should I pick it up this way, and so on. But at some point I just have to pick it up. And then I think well I wonder how I should

follow the argument, I wonder what I should say next, but at some point I just have to say it. It is the same when cooking a meal. This is the spontaneity of human action. At some point we just have to act. When we act spontaneously, our thought does not come into it, we are not thinking. It is something that flows from our innermost being, we do not plan it, we do not premeditate it. Of course we can learn it and acquire it, that is skill, but when it happens it is just spontaneous, it is unconditional, it is a gift. It is a gift, we are not asking for anything.

Now we will move on from men in a way to women. This is a double-edged sword. If we look at women's domestic labour, it is not respected or recognised by the capitalist economy, it is not paid, it is not part of the commodified role; with domestic labour the woman does not sign a contract with her children, it is unconditional, non-contractual, it is a spontaneous gift. In a way that is a beautiful thing. If we are to have this vision, this vision in Buddhism, in Marxism (only of course the best, that is true of everything), if we are to realise this vision, we have got to have these qualities, unconditional spontaneous behaviour, unthought behaviour but effortless behaviour, exhausting but still effortless and joyous. Not only that but holistic as well, because the women typically will know how to balance the interests of one child against another, when the husband is coming home, when the neighbours will pop in. There was a UN report produced a couple of months ago which basically argued that if men carried on 'husbanding' those resources, being in charge of resources, then there was no future for the planet. It would be down the spout in fifteen to twenty years. But if women took their modes of domestic economy and employed them globally, nationally, in power, then there was a real future.

This asymmetry between women's typical, unconditional, spontaneous behaviour, this asymmetry and the reified alienated world of men is, to repeat, a very double-edged one. But the asymmetry is there and in the characteristics of women's domestic labour there is what you could call a kind of punctuated prefiguration of what we must have universally in the future. But it is not only something we must have universally in the future, we also do have and must have it, at least partially, now. And, men to

be men must in this respect be as women, and they are women. When the wife is not there, the man will parent spontaneously and joyously and in a well balanced and sharing household, then the male will actually take joy in discovering the women within and being it.

And of course women, for their part, will engage in long chains of mental reasoning. You may think you are not be good at arithmetic, but come on, it's fine. You can enjoy it. There is even room for chess. When you think of chess (there is room for chess, and room for what I am talking about in chess—in fact there couldn't be chess without it) or the labour of Newton in working his way towards his great discovery of gravity or of Einstein working his way towards the discovery of space time. Well what happens? When it comes, it comes from nowhere, this flash, out of the blue, it is something which cannot be induced or deduced, it comes from the transcendent, from the beyond. Take the most refined, exceptional, take the most quotidian, ordinary, acts. In either case these are spontaneous, these are gifts. The gift of discovering gravity was a gift from nature, which the universe, god (you can call it what you like), the cosmos, gave to Newton. But it was a gift given to a specially prepared mind, because the mind had toiled ardently, arduously, prepared itself exhaustively. You can say that mind, Newton's mind, was so at one with the area of gravity, the whole physical field that we now know as gravity, that when the moment came, the moment when the creative inspiration came, he was gravity, he was one, in that 'eureka' he *became* gravity. This was a non-dual or transcendental moment.

Just before we go back to this, let us follow this example of the child who is learning something. So it seems in a way the child must already know it to learn anything. Now when he has this eureka, this, 'I get it, I see it', it is very similar to what the scientists or the artists have when suddenly they know they have done it. Everyone has it. When you have mastered a skill, when you have built the skill into yourself and just clinch it, it is a new gestalt. So in all processes of learning or creativity you will find there are four characteristic moments. First the emergence of something out of the blue, somewhere, somehow the child suddenly sees it, or Newton sees it and gets it. Or you understand

a picture, or understand how to interpret a book or understand what a philosopher is saying. Now I see what he is doing. That is the basis. Then with this understanding, the knowledge is still heteronomous and you have to continually keep it in mind. Actually, as a philosopher, as a poet, or as a writer of any sort, you often find that you get an idea and then it's gone. So the thing is you have got to write it down, externalise it. That is the second step. And then of course when a child or anyone else is learning something they have to gradually make it part of themselves. And this is an extraordinary arduous process but also a process that can be very enjoyable. This is a process of formation, of shaping, playing, you apply, you get to see how the computer works, what you can do with a car, what you can do with a language, and then at some point you just know it. Then you have in-built the knowledge.

So it is a dialectic. The knowledge was there implicitly already. Then it was awakened by something from outside, came to consciousness, but you were not in control of it, so you gradually had to master it, make it one with yourself. Then when it is one with yourself, it is not outside you anymore. At this stage you can be spontaneous. Then you can engage in objectification, that is action, that is making things in the world. So every cycle of creativity has these characteristic moments, the lightning flash, the inspiration; then the creation itself, involving externalisation; then the shaping, formation, the gradual deep re-internalisation; then the making, the production of objectification of something new. The fifth component of the cycle of creation is seeing whether what you have made reflects your intentionality. Does that express the internal impulse that I had, or not? When it reflects your intentionality then the cycle of creation is perfectly complete.

Now this is in fact the cycle of cosmic creation. All cosmologies have the same characteristic formula, from nowhere, out of the blue, there may be seeds, it may be something which comes and goes but something emerges. Then there is the phase of creation, it stabilises. Then the phase of shaping, formation. Then it is objectified. And then it fulfils or fails to fulfil the intentionality of the creator. Every human act mirrors these five phases of the cycle of creation. So every human act, including especially every act of learning, mirrors if you like the creation of the

universe. And at the end of the day what we want to do is to fulfil ourselves. Find our reflection in the outside world. When will this be? This will be when we are fulfilled and that will only be when every human being is fulfilled and then that would be finally fulfilling or completing the initial impulse.

So corresponding to these five phases of the cycle of creation, critical realism, or the philosophy that Lakshmi mentioned, has engaged in the re-thematisation within western philosophy of ontology, that is the theory of being. Because I was invited to share my experiences at school and at college, and I will if we have time, I can tell you that when I was an undergraduate you could not say anything about the world as such in western philosophy, it was a prohibited, a taboo subject. That was the first step in critical realism which was just thinking being. The second step was thinking being as a process. The third step was thinking being as a process and as a totality, as a whole, holistically. The fourth step was thinking it as all those things and as incorporating transformative, self-conscious, potentially self-conscious transformative human agency and reflexivity—that is our capacity for the unity of theory and practice. And then the fifth stage was to think being as in some way fulfilled, as in some way free, as in some way realised.

This is the stage that I am now developing, in which I would like to bring in new spiritual concepts, or put them in a slightly different light. But let us see how we can apply them to education. So just going through those five phases in the cycle of creation you can see that they correspond to five moments of human action, a moment of will, a moment of thought, a moment of feeling, objectification and the moment of finding fulfilment in your objectification or not. They correspond to those five domains of the successive enrichment of being and they correspond to various ground-state properties. These are fundamental characteristics of human beings. So the first would be freedom, the second would be creativity, the third would be love, the fourth would be right-action and the fifth would be the capacity to fulfil intentionality. Now most people think that the spiritual is something very far removed from ordinary life. And they would associate the spiritual quite rightly with concepts like transcendence with non-duality.

What I want to say is transcendence and non-duality is the underpinning, is the ground level of human beings and we are all familiar with it, in fact it is going on here all the time. Philosophers have had a wrong concept of being and of agency, not only materialist philosophers, but even spiritual philosophers have had a wrong concept of non-duality and transcendence.

So let us go into this a little bit because I want to argue that our goal as educators, self-educators, is to be a party to a process of being and creating and helping beings help create themselves to be non-dual beings in a world of duality. Let us look at transcendence. Something which is involved is obviously identification. There are two terms which are separate, so there is me and you, or there is a state of consciousness you are in and a state of consciousness that you seek to get into. In fact these exemplify two very simple paradigms of transcendental identification. One is when you lose your sense of objectivity, you lose the object in a subject–object duality and just become one with yourself, deep into one with yourself, then that lovely bundle of creative energy or bliss or contentment or peace. That is one paradigm. The other is when you lose your sense of subjectivity and go completely into Something outside yourself. This is when you become engulfed in a picture, inspired by music, you lose any sense of separation between yourself and the notes.

Now the extraordinary thing is that transcendental identification is essential for any human communication or act at all. Unless you were at one with my words in the simple sense that you understood at some level what I was saying, then I would not be communicating to you. If you say hello how are you, then the other person has to understand 'hello, how are you', and in that moment of understanding, there is transcendental identification. If you are watching a film, you lose your self, if you concentrate, focus on the film, you lose your sense of separateness from the film. When you are reading a newspaper, how could you understand a sentence in it unless you were one with that sentence? You couldn't. The moment you cease to be one with the sentence you are not reading it, you are not listening. You become completely one with the act. So this transcendental identification, or transcendence in the sense of breaking down the

duality between subject and object, is something we are familiar with in every aspect of our social life.

However, it is not only that; non-duality is not only a characteristic of states of consciousness; it is a characteristic of action because when you spontaneously know how to drive a car you do not think about it you just drive it. When you spontaneously know how to drive or to speak, you just drive or speak, you just spontaneously express yourself. When a baby is crawling by you just pick it up, you do not think about it, you just do it, in a non-dual way. Everything in life, every action you perform has an element, and is sustained by that element of non-duality. That element you touch something with is your ground-state or something which is consistent with it. So we are all very familiar with who we essentially are. Then there is a fourth aspect to transcendence. This fourth form of transcendence is when two people work so perfectly together as a team that there is no sense of separation. You can find two people who cook together, one anticipates the move of the other, or two footballers or two cricket players in perfect unity. Again, a group of musicians must be in this state to produce anything. Have you ever thought how odd it is how so few people actually bump into each other on the streets in India, or anywhere else for that matter. There are so many people, so little space, there is so little calculation. This is magical, the synchronicity that stops people from bumping into each other. So this is the fourth kind of transcendental non-dual state we must be in to do anything. So this state of non-duality that spiritual philosophers have talked so much about is something that we are very familiar with in our everyday experience.

Now a lot of philosophers think that because it is spontaneous it is not structured. Now that is not true. Because when you have unity with a whole, a picture, then of course that unity is structured. When you listen to the music, the music has a holistic structure, you arc at one with a whole. Our concept of unity, of oneness, is far too simple, oneness is not punctiform, is not a point. Oneness is a whole. When you have oneness with oneness it is a whole with a whole. It is two wholes, meshed. To have transcendental identification is consistent with—*do just come in and everyone just join the whole*—see how nice, how beautiful,

synchronicitous, coherent, timely nature is because this leads into my second point that transcendental unity is not only consistent with non-punctiform, differentiated wholes, is the way in which a beautiful picture or sequence of music is differentiated, but it is consistent with development, so you can expand and grow. Supposing you are perfectly realised, perfectly enlightened: that does not mean that you know every skill. If no-one has taught you Japanese, how are you expected to know it; if you decide to learn it, you might learn it faster than other people or you may not. So you go and acquire it and you build that skill into your unity. In the process of building that skill which is external to you into yourself, you remain whole all the time and you embed, you recursively embed, that new development into yourself and so expand. So we can be non-dual and growing beings. People have always thought that when you reach the absolute then that is the end. Actually the absolute is only the beginning, all the rest is free development, growth, expansion.

It is important also to appreciate that saying that I am in a state of non-duality is not to say we are the same; we can have uniquely differentiated properties, this is very important for education. Actually when you approach enlightenment then you have no sense of a personal ego, so this point really does not matter very much to the enlightened being. But it is worth noting that every *avatar* is the most uniquely defined being, every Buddha is different, every enlightened being is uniquely different, the more creative, the more of a genius you are, the more expanded you are, the more unique you are. But you do not have a sense of your uniqueness because you do not attribute your uniqueness to an ego, you do not 'own' your uniqueness any more than someone can 'own' the truth. Your uniqueness is a manifestation of the cosmos, you are just happy, privileged to be a point at which the cosmos can fulfil itself. The really important point is that each of us in our ground-state is unique. And understanding this uniqueness and respecting difference is consistent with non-duality because I can become one with you. Supposing we are arguing about which team plays better at hockey, you may say Holland I may say Germany. We may understand what the other is saying so we

have transcendental identity as a condition for the argument, but he has his point of view and I have my point of view. This is a way in which two people can be non-dual, one can be a gifted artist, the other can be a gifted scientist. One can be and esteem, love their identity as an Indian, as a woman, as a Maharashtrian, as a hockey player, and the other can love their prowess as a basketball player, as Jewish or whatever. And they can both be non-dual beings. So we have non-duality consistent with the holism, differentiation, with development, with identity-in-difference.

The last point to appreciate is that non-duality does not mean that you stop fighting. The best warrior has total identity with the enemy, completely understands the enemy. I know as a philosopher—we could go (as Lakshmi was suggesting) into my battles at school and so on—but I know as a philosopher that I cannot really critique a false and mystified system of beliefs until I totally absorb it, am totally at one with it. So the best general is the one who has done his reconnaissance, the one who completely understands his enemy, he is totally at one with his enemy. But he is not only at one with the enemy because he is going to fight back and kill and remove his enemy. We become one with the other, not in order necessarily to agree with the other or to be the other permanently; but in order to eliminate the other. So we have to understand what are the blocks, the constraints, the checks on our own emancipation, what are the blocks, the constraints, the checks on the emancipation of all people, all beings everywhere. We have to become one with them. We have to totally understand them to eliminate them, that is these blocks, constraints, forces. This means that the spiritual being is also a warrior, but he is a warrior at peace with himself. This is the beautiful thing, and when Krishna said to Arjuna—do not be upset at your *dharma*, what you have to do, for you have to understand the soul is immortal, and it is your *dharma* for you to kill your enemies, you just focus on your action, do not worry about the consequence—he was telling him, you can be a man of god and fight. That is what we have to do. The extraordinary feature of action is that at a first level it is at once a gift from the universe and an offering to the divine or to nature, to our fellow human

beings, whatever it is that we love. At a second level, it is a transformation of the world. And at the third, it is a struggle, part of a process, the practice of emancipation.

At this point I will end up and say that all this really is possible because of some very beautiful features of our ground-state and our connectedness in it. Which means that in a real sense, a sense which is very difficult for most people to comprehend, you are not really different from me, but you actually are me. Sure, you are different as an embodied personality from me, but you are also enfolded within me, you are part of me and I am part of you and therefore your pain is as much my pain. When I fully understand this, raise my sensitivity to a level that I can feel it as my pain then your unfreedom is as much a curse, a blight on me as my unfreedom. Then I cannot stop struggling until everyone is free. This is the ideal. The freer I become the more my action will move in the right direction.

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Your words were like music to my ears.

Roy

Everything is a holistic performance; my words were in unity with your response.

It is a real pleasure to be here, I feel very much one with you and your project, but can you say something more about experience?

Roy

I think that experience is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it is a window on the world, so we learn from it. And then at the same time, as and when we learn, we have to let go. It is a very extraordinary thing to have to say but it is true. As long as you cling to something, someone you have had a bad experience with, it will imprison, impede and hurt you. Then what should you do? Imagine that you have a lovely jewel box there and this bad experience is something like a rock coming at you, you pluck the jewel

from the rock and put it in that jewel box; that is the learning, the rest you let go of.

Suppose someone has done something terrible to you, you just let it go. Of course you will be wary of, you will be sensible about that person. When I say that love is a ground-state quality and that we should—and (to an extent) do—love unconditionally, that is not expecting anything in exchange for it, I am not saying that you should go up and embrace everyone. No, you would not go and embrace someone who was going to put a dagger in your heart, so that is the learning, that is the jewel from that person. What you throw away is that you do not feel that everyone who comes up to you is going to try and throttle or suffocate or abuse you. It is very sensible for women not to go out in the streets in New York at night, or sometimes in London. It is a terrible condition, but it is very sensible. What you do is you learn from that, you do not have a feeling of paranoia haunting you the whole time, you do not dwell on it. You just know it, you build it in, you let go, you are free, you feel it and then you work to transform the situation that makes that action necessary. So you work to get rid not of that rock but the source of all rocks.

That is the teaching, the diamond, the jewel that you plucked from that rock, that has been given to you. Everything in life is like a gift, you say thank you, yes, thank you for teaching me, now I have got to be really careful where I go in Brixton, I have got to be really careful and I have got to work very hard to make it safe for women to walk in the streets in New York and London at night. It is terrible, that is the learning but you do not hold it within yourself. Our minds should be completely free. Actually there should be nothing in our minds. If there is something in our minds, then we are not free to do what we need to do, what is best to do. You cannot learn. It is an extraordinary thing but if you have something in your mind you cannot learn. If something is fixed in your mind, if there is anything in fact in your mind, you cannot learn; your mind at the moment of learning has to be a *tabula rasa*. If there is a preconception there, if there is any fixation, if there is an attachment, if there is anything that clings to or binds you, then this imprisons you as someone who can learn, and it imprisons you as an agent because you are always

going to act under a fixed idea. Moreover it *karmically* binds you. It binds you because until you have cleared that, while you have that within yourself, you are never going to be free and you are not going to be a free agent of change.

This is a difficult one. I was talking about war and fighting and us being at peace, this is the really important thing, we are at peace. But actually all the stories of war, in the scriptures, in the Bhagavad Gita, even the Islamic conception of *jihad*, the holy war is an inner war, when you are at peace with yourself and only when we are at peace with ourselves will we be at peace with each other. And that peace with ourselves means clearing all the rubbish from ourselves. When we have all cleared the rubbish from ourselves we cut off the supply lines to oppression, servitude and unfreedom. Everything in the social world subsists on our love, our creativity, it could not exist for a moment without them. But oppression is real. These are real structures and real systems but we have the capacity to cut off their supply lines. It is a difficult thing to do but we can do it.

Chapter Twelve

The Limits of Thought*

This is the first gathering to celebrate the opening and expansion of the Kolkata Centre of the Krishnamurti Foundation of India. He was, as you know, a unique and original thinker, preaching a philosophy which articulated what he had in his personal life, what he expressed was a feeling, a perception of light, with a teaching which was universal for man everywhere. And that is that if there is any way to get out of the problems of life he showed us the beginnings. We are very fortunate today to have here with us, Professor Roy Bhaskar, who has agreed to come and participate in this seminar and also agreed to give the inaugural address. Professor Roy Bhaskar is well known to philosophy people all over the world, and so he needs no introduction. Professor Bhaskar lives and works both in India and the UK and his work is widely read throughout the world. Moreover he is well conversant with the philosophy of Krishnamurti, so we are very glad to have him here today to open this centre. I have asked Professor Hui to say a few words to introduce Professor Roy Bhaskar for those students of Krishnamurti's teachings who do not belong to the academic world.

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* Inaugural address at Krishnamurti Foundation (India), Kolkata Centre, 16 March 2002.

Ladies and gentlemen it is a pleasure to introduce Roy Bhaskar, not that he needs any introduction. He has been gracing the academic circles of the world for the last twenty-five years, since Roy made his initial mark with the publication of his revolutionary book on the philosophy of science, A Realist Theory of Science *in 1975, and he has been developing this philosophy since then. He was born in England on 15 May 1944. His father was Indian and his mother was English and they were theosophists. He went to Oxford, where he studied philosophy, political science and economics. He then went on to teach first economics, then philosophy at the University of Oxford and other universities around the world. In 1995 he became the founding Chair of the Centre for Critical Realism in London, and he remains the patron of this centre. Since then he has developed his philosophy of critical realism into a greater philosophy of universal self-realisation. He believes in the existence of god as a fundamental categorial structure of the world and unconditional love as the cement or binding force of the world. He believes that we are essentially free and godlike. Above all he believes philosophy should exemplify the unity of theory and practice. Now this applies above all to Roy himself. There are many great philosophers, intellectuals, but most of them are not great human beings. And Roy's vision, creative energy and above all his fount of unbounded love is simply breathtaking. When we approached him for this seminar he readily agreed to come to open this study centre. But immediately afterwards he was taken ill with a serious problem, and most of his engagements were cancelled. However he insisted on coming here today to share his talk with us. We are especially privileged because he met Krishnamurti both in India and in England.*

Thank you all very much for coming here today and I should like to thank the previous speakers for their kind remarks (and especially Prabir Hui who made my participation in this seminar possible). Professor Sen has asked me to say a few words before I begin my talk about my personal connection with Krishnamurti. I cannot really say very much more than anyone else knows—that he was a wonderful man, charismatic, striking. I met him in Chennai and I met him in London and even though I was very young, my father, who I should say who was not really an orthodox theosophist, used to read Krishnamurti, among many other

things, so I picked up Krishnamurti's books when I was quite young. There are so many things, that I was struck by and that resonated to me as a young person—for instance the idea that the slightest thing, anything reflected something profound. It did not matter particularly what you talked about—you did not have to talk about high philosophical topics, sometimes you could talk about freedom, but you could also talk about anything. For there was freedom, creativity, love, beauty, intelligence in a shoelace, or in the corner of a room—it does not matter what or where. For in anything you will find all the mysteries of the universe enfolded. His was a truly oceanic intelligence, energy, love. So that is all I can say really, and I think the other thing I can say is that although this is all in honour of Krishnamurti, he really would not like me to go on honouring him; he would prefer me to say something in the spirit of him.

I think our primary task is to carry on the work that he began. So what I am going to do is give a talk in the spirit of the work of Krishnamurti on a subject which was very important to him, a talk precisely on the question of thought and the limits of thought. And I will not use, even though I know this is a largely academic audience, academic jargon, I will try to talk very simply and plainly. You all know that Krishnamurti was opposed to—this is the one jargonistic word I will use—heteronomy. That is anything that suppresses the creativity, the love, the unbounded energy that he really believed that human beings had. These aspects of heteronomy consisted of (or were constituted by) among other things, leaders, gurus, systems, religions, orthodoxies, organisations, institutions—and thought. And it is thought that I will concentrate on.

If you read Krishnamurti superficially you might think he is against everything. Now what about this 'being against everything'? I am going to read you a poem from the great Sufi mystic, Jelalalludin Rumi, and there is a little bit of Krishnamurti here:

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim
Not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen,
Not any religion or cultural system
I am not from the east or the west

Not out of the ocean or up from the ground
Not natural or ethereal
Not composed of elements at all
I do not exist
Am not an entity in this world or the next
Did not descend from Adam or Eve
Or any origin story
My place is placeless a trace of the traceless
Neither body or soul
I belong to the beloved
Have seen the two worlds as one
And that one call to and know
First last outer inner only that breath breathing human being

When you do all the negations, when you say no system, no organisation, no leaders, no fixed dogma, no fixed thought, no papal thought, no priestly thought, no spiritual authorities, no fixed emotional make-up, nothing, then what do you get when you have stripped all those things away, what do you get? It is not nothing; it is not only just nothing. When you strip away everything that we impose, everything that, heteronomously, we impose on human beings we get free, creative, loving, spontaneous, energetic, intelligent, right-acting human beings—left to ourselves in what I would call our innermost nature. Technically what I would call our ground-state. We are free, creative, loving. We are also right-acting, we will do the right thing and we will love it when we allow it. What gets in the way? This was Krishnamurti's great problem: what gets in the way?

I am going to talk, about thought, how thought can get in the way. Let me give you an example. Thought, I want to say, impedes and constrains our creativity, our loving nature, our capacity to act right. Let us think about this. When you have a new idea that never comes from thought, it always comes from a space beyond or behind or between thought. When Newton discovered gravity, he was not thinking, it was when he was going for a walls, when he was not thinking. When he stopped thinking. Of course Newton was unique, he had done all the spade work. If

you like, the unknown, the unmanifest, the transcendent, the magical mystery, the boundless energy of the universe was ready there with the answer to pop into his head. But only when he let go, when he stopped thinking. Could he have the idea of gravity without not thinking? No. Not thinking, unthinking, suspending thinking, allowing the move to the mill space of unthought was essential to, let us say, the consummation of his thought in gravity. Actually you can show formally that it is impossible to produce a new idea from the orthodox canons that we philosophers have regimented as induction or deduction. Nor can you deduce a new idea by dialectic, nor by the most radical algorithm. A new idea always comes from the unknown, it always comes out of the blue, it always comes from nothing. Obviously we will see what place thought has to play. But to be creative, just in that moment of creativity, you have to stop thinking, to let go. Thought will block that creativity.

Now love, let us talk about love. Normally we just love. A parent will love a child. Or meeting someone you would normally think 'oh she is a lovely person', if I had two apples I would give that person one if he is hungry, I would do that spontaneously. What would stop me doing that? Well I might think, 'is this a good thing?' Then I put a condition on my gesture, then it will not be unconditional, I will not be giving, I will not be loving, I will be taking back by imposing that condition. My thought will impose a condition, 'what is she going to do for me?' What do I get for that apple? That is not love, that is love mixed with a contract, that is love mixed with a condition, that is an exchange, a commercial transaction. We can see that love is stymied, checked, impeded by thought. If we see a little baby crawling into the water, spontaneously we rush to rescue the baby, pull it from the water. We will do that spontaneously; when we do not do it, is when we think. We think, 'oh is this a good thing?', 'will I make a fool of myself?' Suppose the baby was crawling here, 'oh I can't do this in a seminar', 'not in this distinguished gathering'. You see thought will get in the way of our spontaneous right-action.

The way thought impedes our loving, our creative, our spontaneous right-acting nature, it also drains, dissipates, consumes our energy. If you can do something without thinking, what is

the point of thinking? You are wasting energy aren't you? It not only drains our energy and prevents us from doing the creative, loving or right thing, it also sets up a repetitive pattern, a syndrome. So Krishnamurti says, and I agree, that the moment you name something, for example the moment you name me as an academic, that sets up an expectation in you. You cannot see the blackboard behind me, but you probably expect me to look to see if you are taking notes, it sets up that repetitive pattern of behaviour. These fixed systems of thought, these syndromes of thinking behaviour, these are terrible things. Thus if someone says 'Islam', or names somebody as a Muslim, that immediately activates, engages, puts into a state of readiness a pattern—and that is just to name someone in a particular way. It was (I do not mean this as a criticism) it was mentioned that my parents were theosophists (whatever else you already knew about me). That is fine, but it immediately sets up the expectation that what you are going to hear today is something close to theosophy, and that is not true. But you see the name, the thought, the label sets up an expectation and this too will tend to trigger an emotional response.

Thinking, naming, judging impedes creativity, loving, right-acting human nature. They drain our energy and they set up repetitive patterns of behaviour. They bind our energy. Really we are bundles of energy. When you have an addiction, say an addiction to smoking, think how much energy you use in keeping that addiction going. You may have an addiction to drinking, or you may have an addiction to reading books or reading a newspaper. Consider how much energy it takes to keep it going, to keep on doing it. Everyday you have to read the Kolkata *Telegraph*, twenty minutes or half an hour gone. In England I know some people who read the *Times*. In the old days they used to start by getting the *Times* ironed! The servants were supposed to iron the *Times*, and it would come nicely ironed and starched and for two solid hours they would read it. Starting with the marriages, births and deaths and going through the sports news and ending up at the world crisis on the back page just before the crossword.

You might suppose that if we can do something with our thought then we should. However the extraordinary thing is that we cannot do anything by thought. Suppose I think there is a

glass of water, suppose I think now how do I want to pick it up. Or perhaps I think now I want more than one sip, how shall I do it. At some point I just have to do it, at some point it just has to be spontaneous, at some point I have to stop thinking and do it. You can think about how to do something as long as you like but that thought will never take you to action because, at some point you just have to do it. In any action there is that non-dual, what I would call basic spontaneous component. We cannot do anything without it, we cannot even think without it. What I am saying is that we cannot do anything by thought, or to qualify that a little bit, by thought alone.

We cannot even think by thought. How do you think, who thinks their way into thinking? You just think, you do not do thought, you just have a thought, where does it come from? You do not know, it just comes. Hearing, you do not think about hearing. You either hear or you do not hear, it is simple. Of course if you do not understand, then you think. That is fine but there must be something that you do not understand which immediately you hear, you just perceive. Whenever we do anything in life there must be a level at which we just do it. Moreover, at that level when we just do it, then normally, by and large, we are doing the best thing, the right thing, spontaneously it will be good, it will be creative. When we are doing anything creative it has to be like that: we cannot think our way into creativity, we can prepare the ground for it, but the creativity will just occur like that. Similarly, when we think about doing something loving we are already taking the love away. When we are being loving, we just love. Thinking about loving is putting a condition on it.

Actually this is extraordinary. I am saying we cannot even think about thinking: we just have to think, so thinking is not something we do, thinking is a happening within us. So what we have here is a model which Krishnamurti was very against. The model was of an ego, an I, and an I, moreover, who manipulates, controls the world. So we have the ego, the I in-here and the world out-there and the world out-there includes our thought world, because when we are thinking about thought we think that the ego, the I, the me here is manipulating and in control of my thoughts. But I am not, I do not even know who I am.

Actually the thought is happening of its own accord, so to speak. So this is why it is so important to pay attention to our thoughts. For if we do not pay attention to our thoughts, and we do not understand the limits of thought itself, then we will get stuck in this ideology of thought. This model of an ego and a world, an object world to which the ego is attached which it manipulates, exploits, interferes with, generally in the nicest way you could say it is the model of an individual subject and an object world outthere, which is a world subject to what philosophers call instrumental reasoning, that is means–ends rationality. How will that get me this, or how will it enable me to achieve that objective.

Now Krishnamurti was entirely opposed to this. What he would say now is: unthink, do not think, unthink. But how do you unthink? How do you undo this model. It is very easy. Now you are listening to me, are you listening? Then you are not thinking, you are listening. If you are listening you are not thinking. If you are thinking you are not listening. You cannot do both. You cannot both listen and think. So it is very easy to listen. It is very easy to be, it is very easy to act, it is very easy to be loving. What you cannot do is simultaneously be listening and thinking. Or you cannot think about being creative and be creative.[1] If you are loving, then you cannot be thinking about being loving. Thinking about loving is not loving, but thinking. Similarly if you are thinking about acting right, then your intentionality is split between the thought and the action. Or consider looking, we can look, we look; when we stop looking, when we get distracted then we have lost our focus, then we think. It is well known in the Hindu spiritual traditions that there is an old puzzle that teachers of meditation used to give their pupils. They used to say: meditate, I give you five minutes now to meditate. Then after three minutes the teacher would say, hands up those who are meditating. Fifty per cent of them would put their hands up. 'So you think you are meditating, then go out of the class, you certainly are not meditating: you cannot be meditating, if you *think*

[1] Of course you can creatively think about being creative, but then you are not thinking about your creative thought; you are being creative in thought—you are thinking without thinking about thinking.

you are meditating'. For you cannot both think and meditate. The one precludes the other. Similarly, you cannot be listening to me if you think you are listening to me. For then you are thinking, you are not listening. So it is not difficult to find paradigms of doing things without thought.

Let me just give you a little puzzle, and then we will try and explain it at the end. This is a Zen koan. This is what you are supposed to think about: the wild geese cast their reflections upon the water, but the water has no mind with which to receive them. So a Zen abbot would give his monks or some particular monk that koan to solve. We will come back to that later.

Because we are talking, obviously we know that thought must play some role. Surely Krishnamurti must allow, or I must allow, that thought plays some role in our life. Why were we given a mind if we were not supposed to use it? Why were we given language if we were not supposed to name, classify, describe? So what role does it play, we have to ask. It was Einstein who said 'the world we have created today as a result of the thinking thus far has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them'. Yes indeed, but perhaps part of the problem is not just the particular thoughts we have had, but thought, or discursive thought (i.e., thought using or in language) itself, or perhaps the role which we give it. For we are living in a world which is very highly intellectualist, very thought—thought is a big part of our world. We know that thought and mind is irreducible in some way in life, it has tremendous creative power. We are living in a highly technological, technicised world and those technologies and techniques that have been produced are products of thought. There are of course good, beautiful technologies and bad, corrosive technologies, but both alike are the products of our thinking and this is the point that Einstein was making.

So we cannot just dismiss thought, and we know that we all think the whole time. Thoughts play some role in our life, so we have to understand this. We know that we all think directly and intuitively, we cannot help thinking. So even if you set yourself the target of not thinking, unthinking, you cannot force yourself not to think, you have to do something else, you have to listen.

That is why people who meditate use a *mantra*, or if they do it by visioning, they have to contemplate something. Or if they pray or worship then it functions in the same way. But so does listening to music. So extraordinarily enough does watching television. Because when you are watching the television, you are not thinking, you are just following. When you are reading a newspaper you are not thinking.

So the realm of the non-dual, the realm of the spontaneous, the realm of the unthought is basic to human existence. You cannot understand, I cannot communicate with my friend. Nirmalya over there, unless at some point he just understands me, no thinking about it. It does not matter, he might not hear my words and say 'Roy could you repeat that', then I would say yes the word is 'recollection', 'ah!'. At some point he must have directly, non-dualistically, unthinkingly understood something even to ask me what he did not understand.

In the same way no-one ever does everything or anything completely wrong. We must get something right or it would not count as an act at all. If you think about it, for anything to count as an act it has to be describable in a certain way. So even if I make a mistake, supposing I knock this tumbler of water over, or upset this chair, that would have to be something which counted as an act, in so far as I was responsible for it. It would still have to be something that I did. Or supposing I introduced Professor Sen as Professor Das or Professor Sengupta then it would be a terrible mistake but at least I would have got the words right.

This is not just the case with action, this is also the case with love. For we would all agree that war is absolutely terrible. But how is a war actually sustained, how? By the soldiers fighting at the front. So what do they do? They show boundless solidarity, that is a manifestation of love for each other, and they will die for their cause. They may be completely wrongheaded but it is a manifestation of love; and war could not keep going for a moment without the love shown by the soldiers at the front and without the support, compassion and solidarity of their sisters, mothers, daughters back home, which sustains them. So war actually depends on love. Similarly you could not have a robbery, a robbery could not be successful, a band of robbers would not

hold together, unless the robbers had solidarity. No universe, nothing, no social interaction would be possible without love.

Similarly the most routinised, repetitive systems of thought or systems of production only keep going as a result of our creativity, our creative ingenuity. Everyone knows that you cannot keep a production line going without the people who are operating it stepping in and keeping it going. You cannot even keep a computer going or a fridge going or the electricity going without kicking it, you have to kick the fridge! Human action, spontaneous creativity our ingenuity is necessary to sustain the most repetitive regimes.

Let us see how we can get out of being stuck in this position of thinking that thought is essential. One thing you all know about Krishnamurti is that he asked us always to be watchful, to look, to listen, to notice. This is what I am saying. Now we are talking about being watchful about our thoughts, seeing what we are doing when we are thinking. When we are seeing what we are doing when we are thinking, we are not thinking, remember that. So you have a thought. Suppose your thought is 'what is happening back home', then you are immediately distracted, you are in a non-dual state, you are not understanding, you have a split intentionality, you have a divided mind. You cannot do anything about what is going on back home now. But at the same time you cannot make the best of the situation here and now because you have lost your concentration, your focus. So what we do is we observe. You do not judge, condemn or blame yourself. Instead, you observe. What happens?

There are two ways of being watchful. We can step back from the thought or we can go into the thought. Consider stepping back. Supposing—let us take an emotional case—you are angry. What do you do? You are in a state of angry consciousness, you are absolutely mad. Krishnamurti tells you watch, observe, do not judge, do not say I should not be mad, do not put your thoughts and preconceived opinions in there, just stop, just watch. Then immediately you will find that something magical happens, you are no longer angry, you are not in angry consciousness, you are in consciousness as an observer of your angry consciousness, you are in consciousness of angry consciousness. And then if you

want to double-check, you can look at your observing your angry consciousness, your consciousness of your angry consciousness, then you will say yes, I am no longer angry. Then you can of course step even further back, going further inwards in that direction, that dialectic, because whatever state of consciousness you are in you can always (reflexively) make it the object of your consciousness.

One of the useful things about this inwards retreat from a state of mind or a feeling or anything is that once we have identified it, and see it is there, once we know what it is, we can work on it. We can go into its causes, we can look at the situations under which that thought arises. But actually there is something else even simpler than that because the power of awareness, the power of attention is so great that it will even by itself tend to dissolve the problem, to untangle, unbind the problem, then dissolve the thought (or emotional state) you were in.

Before I go into the other form of the dialectic, which is rather than stepping back from going right into the thought (or emotion), let us ask, if we are talking about the limits of thought, then what is thought being contrasted with, what am I contrasting thought to? I talked about spontaneity, I talked about creativity, I talked about love, but these are not philosophical categories. So what philosophically can we counterpose thought to?

Firstly, consciousness. You can be conscious without thinking, you can just be aware, just observe; you are still conscious but you are not thinking. So that is the first thing, the first contrast, you have consciousness that is distinct from thought. The two are not one-to-one related. Not all consciousness is thought. This is a common mistake in western philosophy and indeed in the west generally. In the Indian tradition it is much clearer because there is a conception of Self and consciousness apart from thought, and moreover thought takes two forms. There is the intellect which is *buddhi* and there is the mind, *manas*.

There is a second thing to which thought can be opposed: this is intuition. So we have the intuitive intellect. Actually most of the things we do, we just do by intuition, we just know. Yesterday I was talking to someone about love, and they were saying that within thirty seconds you know whether you are going to

love or like someone. I have found that in my experience of interviewing people for jobs, within thirty seconds or less I know whether they are right. You just intuitively know. Intuitively we just know how to steer our way through life. This is extraordinary. Our intuition is something that is never given credence to by our orthodox philosophy. For instance, just consider, look how many people there are on the streets of Kolkata, on the pavements, how is it that they do not bump into each other, is that not amazing! Why are there not more crashes, why are people not bumping into each other the whole time? Intuition is guiding them, just miraculously. When I was in Edinburgh they set up a department of paranormal psychology. Many of my students were philosophy and psychology students who did their postgraduate dissertations in the context of a research programme involving controlled experiments, which showed such amazing things as that nine out of ten people knew when they were being stared at from behind. How? They do not have eyes in the back of their heads. But they know. Intuitive knowing, synchronicity, telepathy—these are facts of life. In fact when I am talking to you, and you are listening, there is no physical mechanism, you just know.

So we have this sixth sense which is intuition and that is characteristically associated in western physiology and psychology with the right hemisphere of the brain. Everything to do with the right brain is underplayed or devalued by our experience. It is the left brain, the masculine, the controlling, the instrumental side, it is not the intuitive side, the side that already knows. The mother will know when the child needs feeding, she just intuitively knows. And she does not think in a linear, sequential, one-at-a-tine punctiform way, she intuitively knows what is happening in the whole household, simultaneously. Actually we all do this, whether we are mothers, fathers, not parents at all, we do this in all aspects of our life. That is how we avoid bumping into each other on the streets of Kolkata. By a holistic intuition. Actually everything we do with the left brain, all our instrumental reasoning is undergirded by our intuition. So in addition to the discursive, the thought thinking intellect, we must allow the intuitive intellect, and in Indian philosophy you can do that because you have *buddhi* and *buddhi* is not *manas*, so you can have intellect and discrimination,

choice, selection without thought. However that is not really good enough, because then we want to know what is this intuitive intellect? The intuitive intellect is not self-explanatory; it comes from somewhere else, it comes from something which is beyond intellect itself which you can say is consciousness or whatever. So far we have seen that there are two things that thought can be opposed to—consciousness and intuition.

But then of course thought can also be opposed to just seeing. Just seeing, just perceiving. So when I asked you to just listen, you just listened, when I asked you to look, you just looked, when you are watching television you are just looking. Now actually without this *seeing*, a just seeing which is much more basic than thinking, you cannot learn anything. If I try and teach you something, if (for instance) I try and explain a proof in mathematics or logic on the blackboard, and I say p implies q and p therefore q. Do you understand it? How can I explain that to you? You either understand it or you don't. I can never teach anyone anything. At best I can stimulate something within them which will enable them to say: 'ah, now I see it'. That seeing it, that grasping it, that 'now I get it', that eureka, that's it; that does not mean that we have fully mastered it. Then we have to play with it, shape it, toy with it, appreciate what it can do and how it does it. To understand, say, a law of logic such as *modus ponens*, as logicians call it, or a piece of algebra, or something like calculus, you may indeed have to spend years mastering it. Then suddenly there is a third stage at which it becomes part of you. Then it is no longer external to you, it is not in your mind, your mind is free, clear, you are master of calculus, no one has to remind you of it, you just do it. That is a typical dialectic—first the 'seeing', then the 'exploring' and then the 'in-built knowing', which enables us to do, apply or make things with it.

Now this suggests that there is a more basic level than seeing which was the first step of this process of learning, and that is just being. And this is the fourth thing to which thinking may be counterposed. When your knowledge, your love, your humanity, your concerns are just part of your innermost being, then you do not have to think about or do anything else to do something, you just do it. When the appropriate occasion arises you will know

how to solve the equation. If you know Japanese, and you come across a Japanese gentleman, you will immediately know how to introduce someone else. You will not have to think about it, it will just happen. This is a state of being and the ancient Chinese made this an ideal. You should really just be, you do not have to do anything, just be. Some systems of Vedic philosophy say ultimately when we are in our *dharma*, when we are in our innermost essence we just flow, the sun does not try to shine, it just shines; a flower does not try to (or make an effort to, think or fuss about) blossom, it just blossoms; an acorn does not try to grow into an oak, it just grows into an oak. Of course you can, and manipulative humanity does, try to stop these things. You can stop it, you can stop the sun shining, sometimes you cannot see the sun in Kolkata because it is so hazy, sometimes I have great difficulty in seeing the moon and I ask people, is this a dark moon again? When is the full moon coming? Does it ever come anymore in Kolkata?

Now we have got being then as something opposed to consciousness, at least in the form of thought. Actually this is the starting point of the philosophy which was mentioned at the beginning and which I suppose I am famous for, critical realism, which opposed the dominant indeed hegemonic view of western philosophy, which effectively denied being in favour of thought—a move initiated in modern times by Descartes in his cogito 'I think therefore I am' and consolidated into a dogma (which I have called the epistemic fallacy) by Hume and Kant. Critical realism, which is really a process of continual self-transcendence, theorised being as something you could think and talk about as a philosopher, so that you could say being was such and such, that not everything was thought, although being contained thought. And then there are various categories of being: there is enfolded, potential, implicate being; there is being in process, that is becoming; there is being as a totality or a whole; then there is being as transformative praxis, that is agency, and there is being involved in reflexivity, that is the unity of theory and practice. But in addition I have argued that there is another very important category of being which is nothing. This is being as emptiness, being as absence.

One of the things that dialectical critical realism said was that contrary to what the western philosophers since Parmenides had maintained, nothing and absence and negation and negative states generally (and so process and change) exist, and in fact they are prior to the positive states of being. We could not articulate a sentence, we could not read something unless there were spaces, unless there were gaps we could not make out any positive states. Unless there was absence, unless the world contained space, absence, hiatus, pause, silence, there could be nothing positive. There could be no talk, you could not have an atom. If the world just consisted of atoms there would be nowhere they could move (there would be no motion) and moreover nowhere they could even be (there would be no space). You could not tell one atom from another, they would have to be an undifferentiated mass. And then how could you measure an undifferentiated mass, an undifferentiated mass would become a single point. Everything would collapse without absence, without negativity, without the not. So we have the category of absence. This is the fifth thing to which thought can be counterposed.

Let me go back, to Krishnamurti's dialectics of watchfulness. Pay attention, pay attention to yourself. Observe your thoughts and the great powers of observation and awareness will immediately take you into a state other than your thought. And you will easily, for that moment at least, get rid of your fixations, get rid of your thoughts, your syndromes, your bound (and constrained) energy, you will get out of your thought trap in which you were stuck. Of course when you are back into the normal routines of life you will start thinking again in the same old routinised way and when you do you will have to work on your thoughts, and for example their emotional, unconscious, social or biographical (geo-historical) basis. But we cannot go into that here. Ultimately this dialectic if you focus, if you go further and further back, it will take you to: where? To emptiness, to nothing. But similarly, and this is the extraordinary thing, if you pursue the dialectic of watchfulness the other way, moving away from yourself, your subjectivity, your thought, your states of consciousness, *into* something else, into objectivity, be it a thought or an emotion such as fear, or another person or situation or indeed

any other object at all; and if you go into it, just observing (without judgment, thought), going into it ever more deeply and fully so that you will eventually become one with it—as even now you are one with my words, it too will eventually turn into emptiness. But this emptiness will be rich, energising, liberating, joyous. Not nugatory. Rather, a state of maximum negentropy—blissful potentiality, something like what the Vedic tradition would call sheer *sat-chit-anand*—bliss consciousness of being, or that emptiness (*sunyata*) which is also the richest suchness (*tathata*)—or to move over to a more Chinese inflection, the Buddha-nature which is, in my terminology, the ground-state of everything everywhere.

Indeed absence or emptiness is much maligned, for just consider, how can you learn anything if your mind is not empty, if thought is not absent from it? If you have something in your mind, how can you learn anything? You can only learn something when you have nothing, no knowledge, when you have an empty mind, when you have a clear mind. You see if you carry some knowledge into a learning situation, whether it be a seminar or life (and everything is potentially a teacher), then you will have a preconception, a prejudice, a pre-idea which will deflect your learning, just as it will deflect your action generally. It will not be learning, but split-learning, half-learning. Your focus is going to be split, you are not going to learn. For you will impose on your learning a preconception of what you already know, or rather think you know. It will be like learning mixed with what you already knew, it will be half-learning. But you cannot half-learn calculus: you either know it or you do not know it. You can either drive a car or not, you either know how to work an email or you don't, there are no two ways about it. You know how to change a baby's nappy or you don't, there are no two ways. So knowing nothing is the best advice for a student. Just go into the classroom, be empty, carry nothing in your mind. So what does this mean? Obviously, then, you will discover, learn, find out something. I cannot teach you anything, you already know it. You know it, but you are not conscious of it; it is implicit in, not explicit for you, what I can do is, at some point, awaken, bring out, elicit it (if you are listening and if you are following me). And education just means this bringing out of what you already

know. Then you have the 'eureka', 'now I see it'. And then at that point you can say 'I get it'. But, as we have seen, you cannot say you know it then. For at that stage it will be in your mind quite a lot. But as soon as you can make it your own then, when it is part of your being, it is not in your mind, cluttering, draining, prejudicing your capacity to create, enjoy, love, learn and act freely.

Teachers tell their students before the exam, do not revise, you will not be rested, you will cloud your mind, but students always revise. Why? Both are correct. The teacher is correct that you should not revise, the students should know it, it should flow from their innermost essence—as the sun shines from its being. It should not be something he or she has to think about before the exam. He should be beautifully rested. But of course the student has not mastered it, or she is not sure if she has mastered it so she has to check if she has mastered it or she has to try and memorise it, desperately. I may never have got to the point of 'I get it' with calculus, I may just memorise the formula which will allow me to pass the exam, or something like that.

Now this ideal state of emptiness is the state we should all try to be in, as much as we can. This is the state beautifully expressed by the German mystic Eckhart when he said that 'blessed are the poor in spirit' was the most illuminating statement in the Bible—and where the poor man, the blessed man, was the one who, as he put it, 'wants nothing, knows nothing and has nothing'. We have nothing. When we have nothing we are everything; we are maximally free—both maximally free from (constraints) and maximally free (empowered) to do. Then we want nothing. So there is nothing heteronomous outside ourselves, which can bind us, cling to us, limit us. This is of course very familiar to the Indian tradition—we all know we should not have desires, we should not have attachments, but we cannot go into this here. So on to 'know nothing'. What does this mean? What this means is that there should be nothing in our heads, in our minds; *everything we know in our being*. We should not have any knowledge in our heads, we should not be thinking, we should be unthinking. Only then will you have a clear mind. A clear mind is nothing, a translucent mind, an empty mind, a no mind which is also a 'don't know mind'. No mind and no thought. This is unthinking or no

thinking. To unthink you have to have no mind so that you then have a clear mind, you have an open mind, you have a flexible mind, that you have a creative mind, an active mind, a mind that can do this, a mind that can love.

Then when you go into the classroom—and remember the classroom is life—what mind do you have? No mind, don't know mind, don't know. You don't know, if you don't know something, you don't know it. You say, I don't know it, not I think; everyone says 'oh I think'. You see our world is full of people who are opinionated, we judge, think, name, everyone has an opinion on this or that. As you probably know I am here in Kolkata to give some lectures on spirituality and comparative religion. Whenever I go to give my lecture I sit in a room where I am given very nice hospitality. There is always a particular lady who comes up to me and assuming—she just assumes—that I will be defending everything to do with religion she treats me to a barrage of questions. These questions come in a string: 'how can you justify . . .' 'I really can't understand why you . . .' And she doesn't pause to listen to my answers, if I had any. She doesn't come to my lectures to listen to what I have to say. She doesn't even ask people what I am saying. She just assumes and opinionates. So yesterday, she paused for a bit and waited for a response and said, come on tell me how you would deal with that; and I said 'by silence'. And you know something, she started to smile and we actually started to talk to each other for a bit. And perhaps the next time I meet her we will make further progress. Silence is a very good response in life. Don't we all feel infuriated when someone just talks and talks endlessly. I have two lovely bodyguard students who look after me and take me everywhere in Kolkata, but I was getting very fed up with having to talk to them the whole time. So I said to them listen, now that we are really good friends, we do not have to talk anymore. We can be silent, we can be relaxed.

Now what does this mean, when you are listening, when you are just doing, when you are just being. Supposing I am talking to you and you are listening to me. Something magical is happening—duality and the ego and thought have all disappeared. Just listening, watching, attending immediately breaks down the model of ego and object. Because there is no thought, there is no

subject of the thought, no ego and no object of thought, nothing to manipulate or control, nothing to cling or bind you, to entrap, fixate or 'stick' you. There is no such thought. When you are listening you cannot be thinking, when you are thinking you cannot be listening, if you are listening there is no thought. If you are listening to me then there is no separation between us; there is no ego in me and there is no ego in you, so you have lost your ego and you have lost your thought. Then all you have to do is lose your possessions and your desires, your attachments and aversions. But though this is outside the scope of my talk, you have already made a huge stride in this direction—but as you have no ego there is nothing to attach to or be averse from, nothing to conditionalise or constrain you, nothing to cling to you or bind you. In that moment you are whole and free and are at peace without conflict, at one with yourself—and me, and the rest of the cosmos. And then you will satisfy, at least for this moment, Eckhart's ideal. But I have reached the end because I was only talking about the first loss, the loss of a busy mind.

Chapter Thirteen

Unconditionality in Love*

1. The first point to realise is that love is not an action. Love is a motive or ground for actions but not itself an action. And in fact when you act you should not feel emotional, you should not experience any emotion at all, as that will diffuse and split its intentionality. It is for that sort of reason that Krishna told Arjuna that he should stop crying and pull himself together and do his duty, that is his *dharma*, what he is best at doing, namely shooting arrows directly at the target. And he shouldn't even think about his target (which in this case were the hearts of his kinsmen), he should just focus and shoot. Love is therefore not an action but a moment in the morphogenesis of any action. That is to say it corresponds if you like to the domain of the real rather than the actual. And the different moments in the morphogenesis of an action are (as we have discussed elsewhere) the moments of will (or pure intentionality), the moment of creativity, the moment of love and then the moment of action or objectification, that is making or doing something in the world.

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* Abstracts from a Santiniketan workshop for Kolkata residents, March 2002.

2. Unconditionality is a property both of actions and of emotions and when you do something or feel something unconditionally, then you are very likely to be in a non-dual state. We can't say necessarily certainly; but what we can say is that when you do something conditionally then you are definitely not in a non-dual state, you are in a state of duality. To put a condition on something, whether it be a motive in the genesis of any action or an action in the sequence of one's life during the day (these two will be very closely related of course), when you put a condition on anything, say like love, what you are doing is giving and taking back. In fact you could say that the history of civilisation in a way was initially the history of pure **giving** (in the form of sharing, etc.), including of course giving to yourself; then with the advent of phenomena such as barter and money and exchange,[1] it became **giving and taking**. Now civilisation is such that we are in an epoch of **taking**, just taking without giving.

3. I could go into detail on another occasion to show how non-duality performs three roles in social life:

(a) Non-duality is the basis of the realm or world of duality. That is to say that all of our being, and all the structures in our society are ultimately sustained by a non-dual ground or basis, which I have called our ground-states which are interconnected with each other on what I have called the cosmic envelope. Love is a natural property of the ground-state. We do not have to be, as it were, taught to love, love will flow spontaneously from our ground-state if we let it. What happens is we put blocks and constraints on the manifestation of the love which we essentially are, which characteristically takes the form of negative emotions, such as fear, pride, jealousy, desire, etc. All these negative emotions take the place of or mix with love and deflect its force and power.

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[1] The first act of exchange between two formerly self-sufficient communities sets in motion a dialectic or process which almost inevitably leads to money and exploitative relations between the two communities, be they tribes or whatever. On this view which will be justified elsewhere, it is actually money which lays the basis for exploitative relations, class relations and capitalism, rather than the other way around.

What we need to do then to express love is to let go, let go of all these negative emotions.

Now these negative emotions which replace or deflect love actually themselves depend on love, so in any emotional state, in so far as it is coherent at all, you will find some kind of binding power which is, albeit possibly in a very weak form, a mode of manifestation of love. Actually it would be much simpler if we said that there was no such thing as conditional love; and that all love was unconditional. For nothing which is a ground-state quality can be conditional—conditionality can characterise only its manifestation, not the quality itself. Conditional love would then be love mixed with some other quality, such as possessiveness in the case for the demand for reciprocation; or desire or greed, or fear, or whatever. When you let go, and of course this is often not simple at all, you have to work through and work hard to let go of these very stubborn factors in our embodied personalities, then you will just manifest at an emotional level pure unconditional love. This will inform or rather e-motivate your actions in a way which will depend on the specificity of the content of your action.

We have already seen that love is not an action, so you cannot say from identifying the form of action whether or not it is a manifestation of love. For instance if I was to rush out and hug the lady in the second row of the audience, that would probably be regarded at best as either an embarrassing joke or even as some form of assault; whereas we all know that hugging is, in other contexts, quite an appropriate manifestation of love. So the way we express our love always has to be specific to the person to and with we are expressing it, our relationship to that person and the context in which it is being expressed. To give another example, I may be in a relationship with someone and I have finally got to the point where I have got to tell them what I think is a very hard truth about them; perhaps I have tried subtle ways of expressing this, but now I have to speak it straight out and that may hurt them. Similarly, the best way in which I can express my love for someone may be by leaving them, or walking out of an unhappy relationship; and this may be the only thing I could do. Although love is associated with union, not all unities are real and not all

'unities' are expansive.[2] I will come back to this point later. So the thing to remember here is that love is a very natural property of the ground-state and will automatically and immediately manifest itself in the appropriate action, if we are clear of all the other constraints and impediments.

(b) The second way in which non-duality manifests itself in our social world is through the way in which our social life and our being is each moment constituted and affected. Thus for you to hear my words, you have to identify with me, you have to be one with them. And this level of non-duality, here what I have called transcendental identification in consciousness, is what one might call a primitive, primeval or elemental form of manifestation of love. For in that understanding, that moment of non-duality, we are one. And this is a primary characteristic of love. So here again this is a way in which unconditional love immediately manifests itself on a daily and hourly basis in our everyday lives. Of course much of the time the non-dual mode of constituting, reproducing or transforming our daily activities has superimposed upon it a superstructure of duality, just as our ground-states are blocked or constrained by all the non-dual components in our personality. Nevertheless unless there was that non-dual aspect in our social interactions and in our agency we could not communicate (or even perceive) or act at all. So just as love, and I have argued, unconditional love, is necessarily manifest in any e-motivated action, so in the form of transcendental identification in consciousness it is a necessary constituent of every moment of ordinary life.

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[2] Nor can the notion of unity be identified with any one topographical form. Thus a relationship of love may be sustained despite spatio-temporal difference and independently of what amount of time, or in what activities, the 'lovers' spend together. In general love depends on respect for the autonomy and self-development of the loved one, as I argue a bit later. It is very important to appreciate that unity, a chief characteristic of love, is not identity; and that on the conception of identity that the philosophy of metaReality espouses even identity is not punctiform or simple, but rich, complex, holistic and differentiated. When two such entities feel a strong sense of union, the sort of sense of union, which I would normally characterise as love, they will expand and grow and there will be great reciprocity and mutuality, but one should not expect the elimination of differences.

(c) The third aspect in which non-duality appears as essential in our social existence is possibly slightly more difficult to see, but nevertheless it can easily be demonstrated in your own experience. And that is, if you focus or attend without judgment, thought, or intervening feeling on any state, be it a state of your own body or something in the external world, such as a beautiful flower, but in principle equally it could be a coat or a chair, just attending you will eventually experience a feeling of unity and wholeness with that on which you attend, and (here you should try it on someone you 'hate') you will eventually reach the point that through understanding you find love, and then going deeper through it you find the experience of sheer bliss or joy, what the ancient Vedics called *sat-chit-anand*, the bliss consciousness of being. This aspect of non-duality constitutes if you like the fine structure of the world in which we live. Thus what I am saying is that just focusing on any aspect of the world in which we live, you will find that its fine structure is ultimately constituted by the quality of love, which because you are in a non-dual state must be unconditional love.

So you can see that in these three ways we are all more than familiar with unconditional love. Unconditional love constitutes the fine structure of our universe (in fact it could be said to be the binding, coherent force which makes our universe a universe);[3] it constitutes a central feature of all our social interactions, especially in the form of transcendental identification with other beings, and finally any emotion we express ultimately depends upon the ground-state quality of unconditional love.

4. We can say that there are five kinds of objects of love, five which define in a way by their interlocking, radiating circles of love, each of which will be expanding for you, the lover and what it is (at least potentially) that you love, the beloved, which will be mutually healing, cohering and totalising, unifying. In these five circles are the circle of love you have for yourself; the circle of love you may feel for one particular human being, say one with

[3] We could say that in so far as there is an ultimate level to the universe, a level which coheres or binds it or makes it one (something which has been traditionally associated with god), then it would be characterised by pure unconditional love.

whom 'you are in love', or there may be many such human beings, with whom you feel particular specific love in varying degrees—this is classically romantic or erotic love. Then the third circle of love is the circle of love in which you feel love for all human beings. The fourth circle of love is that in which you feel love for all beings in the universe (here of course we must make a discrimination, because while you can identify with and experience unity in that phenomenological moment with something in our being or in our world which is destructive, such as a person's jealousy, which we are seeking to understand, then this is only to help eliminate it); and the fifth circle of love is love for god. Probably romantic love and love for the divine are the two forms of love which have been most poeticised, talked and thought about.

However the primary form of love must be self-love. For if you do not love yourself then you cannot love, you do not have the power and the energy and the emotion to love anyone else; so that self-love in a way is primary.

Now probably the main motivating factor for most people when it comes to the topic of love is how to find or improve a relationship; this is to talk about the second circle of love. So there are two ways in which you can do this. Let us suppose you want to find someone to love you. The first route is the route of what I would call **reciprocity**. In a moment I will come to the second route which is that of **autonomy**. So following the first path you might think that you want to find someone who is going to complement you, so together you might complete each other, and this is probably the normal feeling about romantic love. Now going into the constitution of such a love. This presupposes some kind of attunement or attraction between the two people concerned. To get this attunement or attraction, you have to be able to become like them, in the sense that you must in a deep way be able to transcendentally identify with them, so that you can see how it is that you can complement your beloved. This will work then through overt or esoteric relations of reciprocity, which I will go into in the discussion. Eventually there will come a point or moment in which you fall in love or are in love, and you may regard yourself as, more or less in some degree, or even feel totally merged or fused or at one. The

problem with the first path is of course that sooner or later you may find that you want to grow or expand in a way which your partner does not like or in a way which takes you away from your partner; and then you have the difficult choice or dilemma either to grow or expand or to stay with or fall in line with or tailor your aspirations to that of your partner.

The second path is far superior. So let us consider now the path of autonomy. We are starting from the same position, that you want to find someone appropriate to be with, to love, and hopefully be loved by. On the path of autonomy, what you do is you shed all the obstacles in your embodied personality, moving closer to your ground-state so you become closer and closer to actually being love, that is you become more full of love. Being more full of love, you will naturally attract others to you. But if you are essentially love and you are in your ground-state, you will soon find whether there is something in the other, or your putative partner, which is blocking or constraining his love, tendentially oriented towards you; then we have a situation in which you are full of love and he is not.

And you will realise that because of that difference, if you still feel attracted or in some way attached to him, you will have to help him clear what it is that constrains or blocks the free flow of love, the kind of way in which your love flows naturally to him. And if that doesn't work, then eventually you will have to realise that this is not going to be a suitable or appropriate or happy relationship. (Or you will have to sacrifice your autonomy, your own aspirations in life which, we have already seen, powered by the norm of single-pointedness or clarity in pursuit of any objective, must eventually take you to a point where you are in your *dharma*, that is on the path towards self-realisation.) And you can carry on in your own way, growing and expanding, becoming more and more full of love and sooner or later you will find an appropriate object of love. In fact if you set out just to find someone to be with, then, as is well known, this will block or inhibit your growth or expansion and be rather counter-productive; you will be living a very limited existence.

A far better thing would be just to go straight into your *dharma*, what is naturally, effortlessly, spontaneously you, then

you will find someone who is in their *dharma*, who will resonate harmoniously with you in the sort of relationship of love which you both want. And then you can grow for a time or in principle forever in a relationship of what I will call **co-autonomy**.

You will all perhaps be familiar with the two most typical modes in which people link up with each other in India today—these are the institutions of arranged marriage and the love marriage, or sometimes just the love affair. The arranged marriage presupposes that in some way the parents (and this is the justification they would give) have some sort of insight into your ground-state or your *dharma* in terms of which they can match you with someone else, irrespective of your choice or feeling. Of course this choice makes a huge presupposition, namely that you will have to feel that the people who are making the choice for you have an insight into your ground-state, which you may feel is not justified by their insights (or rather probably, you will feel their lack of insights) into other features of life. The love marriage or relationship or affair, as it typically occurs in India today, is just a simple route on the path of reciprocity, that is striving for completion by an act of transcendental identification or attunement with the other, and we have seen this is inherently inhibited if you or the other is unable to be at one with their ground-state. Only if someone is at one with their ground-state in a way which will not inhibit your growth and expansion will you have co-autonomy. So basically both the preferred institutions in contemporary India fall a long way short of the path of autonomy, which I would call co-autonomy, which I have been mapping here.

5. Turning now to the other circles of love, the five it will be remembered are love for oneself; love for a particular or group of 'significant others'; love for your fellow human beings, love for all beings; and love for god. I have already argued that self-love is a necessary condition for any form of love. And further, that if you go for romantic love, the second kind of love, the best way to get it is along the path of self-realisation; that is the best way of achieving romantic success is by moving into your ground-state and then you will find a partner who won't inhibit your expansion and development in life. So self-realisation would seem to be what is necessary for the second form of love. The universalisation

of self-realisation, to collective human self-realisation, is obviously what is implied by the third form of love, because clearly your love is going to be somewhat short if you love yourself fully enough to achieve self-realisation, but you do not love your fellow human being to help them achieve their own freedom, fulfilment and realisation. The fourth form of love, by an extension of the previous argument, namely for all other beings whether they are human or not, suggests a goal of universal self-realisation. And in fact it is not difficult to show there is dialectical unity between the goals of self-realisation and universal self-realisation, in that as you approach your ground-state you will immediately become a better and more loving (as well as creative, energised and right-acting) person, thus spontaneously aiding the processes leading to universal self-realisation.

This then leaves the question of love for god. Where does god come into it? Ultimately we would have to say that god, if he exists, would be the totality, something like the cosmic envelope, or if you like the ground or creator of the cosmic envelope. All love is characterised by the conatus or impulse to union or unity, which is not of course the same as (though we can incorporate aspects of) identity with the beloved. In fact the easiest way to define god is in terms of the conception of what is ultimate, the coherent binding force in the universe which I have called the cosmic envelope, or, if you like, the ground of that cosmic envelope (if they are not one and the same). The chief defining feature of the cosmic envelope, that is the totality that binds ground-states, would be pure, unbounded love. Therefore any love will tend to take you, via your ground-state, to the cosmic envelope, it will always have this spin-off or side-effect; but a pure love for god will take the form of love for the totality, that is all the ground-states of all beings in the cosmos; and the more you experience that love, the more you will become one with that totality. Now if you suppose, as I have argued elsewhere, that the totality is in fact enfolded within you as an implicit potential in your ground-state, then the more you experience love for the totality, the more elements within that implicit enfolded totality co-present in you will be awakened or brought into a state of readiness. And the more you will tend to become one with that totality.

So to love god then is to love the totality (or the ground of that totality) and at its limit the love for god would take the form of an objective which went beyond self-realisation, beyond universal self-realisation, which is the realisation of all beings in and for themselves, to the objective of 'god-realisation', that is unity with the totality. This means that at this point you would become one, at least in significant aspects of your being, become the totality, not just be at one with the totality, or exist in a totality which was a harmonious whole, as in the case of universal self-realisation. Becoming the totality would be the ultimate end of love for god. And this in fact we find in the spiritual literature as the goal of what is variously called *fana*, in Islam, the annihilation or replacement of oneself by god. In Sufi literature, one dies to oneself, becomes one with god, but given the particular interpretation of god within Islam, this means that you do literally die, are annihilated, your existence is not preserved, you are replaced by god. Of course it might be said this is just a state of mind reached in ecstasy, but let us not go into that here. Alternatively, we might take a tradition coming from the Vedas, namely the Buddhist tradition. The ultimate goal would be that of *nirvana*, which is a kind of becoming one with god in which you lose not just your sense of separateness from the rest of being (as in the loss of ego in self-realisation), but your very identity. The difference is this that to lose your ego is to lose your feeling that you are separate from other beings, to seek for their realisation as much as, and to realise that it is ultimately the condition of your own. And this I have argued elsewhere is an implication of virtually all emancipatory projects when you go deeply enough into them, but it is very explicit in the ideal of the Bodhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism or Marx's vision of a communist society in which the free development of each is a precondition of the free development of all. This then is the state of universal self-realisation.

The state of *nirvana* or *fana* is rather a state in which you have no identity or existence apart from god. One way of looking at this is that you literally cease to exist and are in a sort of way replaced by god. Another way is suggested by Jesus' talk about going to join his father in heaven, and the metaphor used was of sitting on his throne, a kind of retirement of engagement from

struggles on earth. This then would be achieving unity in consciousness and being with god, and in this state of *nirvana*, on this interpretation, then surely no-one in their right mind would prefer to have only their own powers and consciousness (as it was constituted in a way independent of the totality) rather than the powers and consciousness of the totality itself (or its ground).

It would be as silly—to take an example I used in another context—as Hume saying he really could not decide whether to prefer the destruction of his little finger to the rest of the world. What is wrong with his statement is obviously that (detotalising himself, or his little finger) he does not realise that the destruction of the world would entail the destruction of his little finger too. So clearly he should prefer only the destruction of his little finger. So that if you were given the choice just to be you, or to be you and everything else, would it not be supremely irrational to go for the former? So becoming one with the totality, you could still be, in the sense of having the powers and consciousness of you, at the highest point of your realisation and development before you became one with the totality, i.e., as an independent individual; but now you would have in addition the capacity to become one with the powers and consciousness of everything else that existed. So it would be quite irrational (as irrational as Hume) not to prefer to lose your own identity in that of god, wouldn't it?

6. So what I have sketched out is a natural dialectic in terms of whatever object you love, and remember that whatever your emotion or feeling is (and remember also that you can never not have an emotion or feeling, since emotions and feelings are necessary constituents of all human being and activity), that emotion or feeling ultimately depends on love. And I have argued that all love depends ultimately on unconditional love. We have seen that whatever your initial object of love might be and this in principle includes objects I have not included here, such as a love for architecture or a dog or a particular brand of coffee, that will eventually take you on a dialectic on which you will need to move through the stages of self-realisation, universal self-realisation, and that unity or rather fusion with the totality or the ground of the totality which I have called god-realisation (however far removed from

purview this is now). Indeed I would argue this is a goal which is implicit in all being, since the totality is enfolded in principle within every being which exists, a feature which does not remove the distinctiveness of those beings while the totality is not as yet unfolded within them. So any form of love will set you on this dialectic, in which the first step, a step that most of us (at least those of us who are even aware of it) are struggling very hard on, namely the path of self-realisation, is the best way of achieving any feeling or emotional objective you have. The best way to love and be loved is to become self-realised; and this means you will immediately be working for the self-realisation of all other beings, i.e., the totality of all beings, which, in a way, you are increasingly identifying with and therefore becoming one with.

7. Then can we say anything about *what* you should love? In fact *only* if your love is for the ground-state of your lover will your love succeed. Because if you love anything else but that, then there are two possibilities—either what you love about him is consistent with his ground-state, but then his embodied personality may well develop in a way also consistent with his ground-state but one which you do not love; or it is even possible that if there is no direct connection he will develop a quality that is not consistent with his ground-state in his own journey in life. So this then is the second possibility, that what you love about him is inconsistent with his ground-state, that is, it involves some heteronomy or block or constraint on the love that he can express or reflect back to you, and of course this will not only impede his love for you, but will block and drag back that directness of union of unions which is love loving love, which would otherwise occur if it was you from your ground-state loving him from his ground-state, and in that situation you can indeed lose, in the sense that your love, that is the love which is you, your ground-state, may grow less, be less full, than it would have been if you had chosen some other object of love.

In fact there is only *one* object that you can really love, and that is the *divine ingredient* in the ground-state of the one you love, a divine ingredient which may well and indeed will be normally different from that divine ingredient which is your love. So when you realise that what you really love is the divine or

immanent god in your beloved, then you will soon appreciate that you only love *god*, and that *god is actually the only thing you can love*. Because ultimately the love at the ground-state of the thing or being that you love is or must be that most ultimate and basic ingredient which is most full of love which will be precisely at the level of the cosmic envelope which is the totality. So do you think you have another love besides god? If this argument is correct you mis-identify your love if you think in loving a being that you can love something other than god. However, if you think you can love god without loving the totality of other beings then you are equally mistaken. For there is no god that you can love which is not ingredient or does not depend on the ground-state of the totality of all other beings. So love itself embodies a drive to totality, that means you must ultimately, once you love anything, be set on a dialectic in which you must unconditionally love the totality of all beings, albeit in ways which are specific to the concrete singularity of the relationship you have to them, which does not qualify the unconditionality of your love, but merely qualifies the form in which you express it, i.e., your behaviour.

The drive to totality is not just on the traditional path of devotion, but on the other paths as well. Because if you follow the path of knowledge then the norm is truth and if you seek anything other than the whole truth, you will be in error, because leaving something out will inevitably generate a contradiction which will sooner or later become apparent. Similarly on the path of action, unless your work is dedicated to the totality of all beings, then you will err in your practice (of yoga which of course means union), again yielding an incompleteness in your love or practice and failure in what you strive for. A single person in a society founded on eudaimonistic principles as the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all can undermine that society completely. There is one further point to notice about the relationships of these great norms of truth, love, service.[4] So being full of love on the cosmic envelope, how can

[4] Similarly, in the case of the path of Hatha Yoga, full embodiment of the principle of love must be practiced because if you do not love any aspect of your embodiment you will go out of balance and become ill. This is true in terms of

you tell whether someone else is full of love? Well you give love and you experience the quality that you feel when you have given the love. If what you get back is an insult or a lie, then of course it may be unintended and you test it further. Eventually a lie or a neglect will expose itself to you in the absence of the peace and wholeness that you should feel as a being of pure unbounded love. If every time you put your hand in the fire you feel pain then sooner or later you know something is wrong. In fact no heteronomy whether it be cognitive, emotional or practical can withstand the scrutiny and power of love. On a final note, it is important to see the connection between love, which unifies all the virtues, and strength. Because actually nothing is stronger than love, love is not soppy or sentimental at all, of course these may be manifestations of a strong love in a particular context. But in its essence love is as the cohesive force in the universe and in your ground-state, that which makes you strong.

8. The ultimate end or this goal, the totality, is not just something which is there implicit in love, in fact in any form of desire, it is implicit in all the constituents of our being. Thus if you take the three traditional paths, the path of truth or wisdom, that is Jnana Yoga, union through wisdom or knowledge or truth, Bhakti Yoga, or the path of devotion, and Karma Yoga, or the path of action or service, we can see that they all aspire to union, union which ultimately must be the totality. Thus the path of wisdom is the path of remedying incompletenesses and absences in the way I have sketched elsewhere as the process of dialectic until you

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the relationship between the qualities that define these paths macroscopically. Thus if you are extremely creative but do not allow yourself to express love then you can end up being an enormously successful villain. Or if you are very loving, and indeed also loving to yourself, a necessary condition for any love at all, because you are only as strong as the love that constitutes you, even if you are full of love and you are extremely boring or uncreative then you will not be able to expand your love because you will not be acting in ways which exploit the natural variety and opportunities of the environment to express your love. You will be a monological lover, knowing only one way to love you will not increase the love that you are at the rate you would be if you were creative.

reach a theoretical totality, the whole truth.[5] The path of Karma Yoga proceeds in exactly the same way until you have a practical totality, ultimately this will be something like a eudaimonistic society, in four-planar social being, which can be extended to the cosmos as a whole. Bridging these two, the theoretical and practical totalities, we have the path of Bhakti Yoga, the path of love, in exactly the same way aspire to the whole. In fact love must ultimately strive for the whole, to leave anything out is inconsistent with the unifying, totalising binding force of love which, to stress, does not mean the engulfment, de-differentiation, of the different species and individuals in creation—for the more beings there are in their *dharma* the more they flower in a unique, empowered way.

So it might seem that if one has to prioritise these three paths one can say that it is ultimately the path of love which binds and sustains each of these paths, love is the expanding totalising force whether in the theoretical field of knowledge or in the practical field of action, and love is of course the defining quality of Bhakti Yoga. So if there is a supreme value in the universe (or some particular aspect of it, or piece of our life) then we are going to have to say it is love. So if you wanted to ask what was the totality, or the universe, or god, then the best answer you could give would just be the source or fount of union with all possible union, that is pure unbounded love, irrespective of the particular forms of its manifestation. For to recapitulate the beginning of

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[5] The whole truth is something which will always have to be relativised to context; the whole truth is what will be relevant and significant for the matter at hand; and you will have to be one with it, and this means that merely you know the central principles in terms of which you can access any particular truths. And there would be no such thing as the whole truth, independently of some particular interest or issue. In this respect there are always practical questions, which will include in the world of duality strategic questions about the truth and its communication, which I will not go into here. In a parallel way in the domain of emotional life on the path of Bhakti Yoga we have seen that the goal often and indeed normally requires fighting and splitting, alienating yourself from elements of the totality you want to heal. You do not stay in a bad relationship, you get out so that you can struggle the better to put an end to a condition in which people slip into bad relationships.

this talk, I argued that love is not an action, but the ground or motive for action. In the same way love is not knowledge, but a ground or motive for knowledge. And now what I have just said that it is love which binds the cosmos together and is the ultimate source of value, and moreover, that if one wanted to know what god was then the only thing you could say would be pure unconditional love.

Actually, however, on close inspection these three paths are not at all distinct. For the defining characteristic of knowledge is identification; which is also at the level of intuition of alethic truths, the actual becoming one with that which you know. This becoming one is an active process, an action, a creative action on your part. And this becoming one is a form or moment of unity between you and what it is that you know, which you have become, and in becoming one, you love; because you cannot know something in this way without becoming one with it, and you cannot become one with it without loving it. On the other hand, if you love something enough, you become one with it, and then you are it, and you know it, so the paths of knowledge, love and action all reduce to one.

9. We have seen that any sustained act of attention, some awareness, in a non-dual mode, without the intervention of judgment, classification, thought, emotion, or physical feeling, will ultimately result in an experience of first understanding that which we have identified with, then feeling love for it, and finally experiencing that pure joy or bliss, which is suchness, emptiness, the Buddha nature or whatever, but an experience characteristic of pure consciousness at the level of the ground-state. So when you focus on something evil, some moment of heteronomy, you will first understand it—this is the first moment in the dialectic of attention or awareness. You will then, understanding it—and the more you become one with it in your consciousness, the more fully you will understand it—be in a position, retreating from that non-dual mode of identification, to fight and eliminate it. However if your attention or awareness is sufficiently strong, because all the elements of the universe are ultimately constituted by or depend on or can be seen under the aspect of implicit consciousness, and all the elements of the universe are ultimately

sustained by the cosmic force of love, then your awareness itself will dissolve it. That is to say your awareness will eliminate the heteronomy or evil you have identified, whether it is within you or outside you. Let us see how this would happen. You would go into it, and then you would find that that element of heteronomy, definitionally being inconsistent with a ground-state, would nevertheless depend on a ground-state, feed off the energy of the cosmic envelope or love. You would eventually by attending to it, by being aware of it, be able to trace it back to that ground-state that it was feeding off, dissolving it in a soup of cosmic love so to speak.

Tracing back the heteronomous element, the illusory or demi-real aspect of being which you have identified will ultimately be dissolved in this way, at the level of the 'Buddha-nature', or ground-state it feeds off, which sustains it. When you get to that point, it cannot be part of the universe any more, because it must *either become one* with the ground-state it is draining, and so lose its identity or cease to exist. (Thus the capitalists would have to become one with the workers, or the aspect of a human being who was a master would have to become one with the aspect of a human being who was a slave, and it is easy to see that the system of master–slave relationships, or the oppressive nature would be no more.) So in dealing with elements of heteronomy, what would loosely be called evil, or unfreedom, oppression (including selfoppression), dualistic duality, alienation and contradiction, recognising that all these things are ultimately sustained by the energy and the attributes of the ground-states of beings, once you cut off their supply lines, they must either collapse into the sea of cosmic love and become one, lose their identity in the ground-state they were feeding off or draining, or they will just exist no more, not be one with the universe which is bound by the force of cosmic love.

As such beings constituted by heteronomy depend on love and the other qualities of the ground-state, the more you suffuse and overwhelm them with love, the more those aspects within those entities which are contrary or inconsistent with love will be outweighed and dissipated, until the point at which they become virtually extinct. You can see this tactic of love, this tactic or strategy of defeating the enemy via love, as being one in which

you drive it back to the ground-state which sustains it, then it must either collapse to love and the other qualities of the ground-state or lose its independent identity. This actually defines a path of fighting oppression and evil by love. Actually, once you realise that love is an emotion, not an action, it does not necessarily have any specific implications for how you do it. At the same time once you realise that what is really important is to be clear about what it is in the being that you love, then you will see that you cannot love something that is opposing or oppressing the flourishing of the ground-state qualities of that being. So inevitably love will tend to destroy the heteronomous and oppressive elements within what it loves. And as the most basic power or level of the universe is just the power of that form of awareness or consciousness which is pure unbounded love which keeps the whole universe together, then ultimately by being at that level, focusing on that object from that level, that object must, in so far as it has love, come to you, and in so far as it has not got love, it will no longer be part of the universe. This is the true meaning of 'the turning of the other cheek', or the path of non-violence.

10. I have been arguing that whatever objective you seek in life, the norm of clarity and the insistent intentionality of your ground-state will eventually force you into a position, that is, set you on a process, whereby you will strive to be only consistent with your ground-state, that is self-realised. And this goes for love in all its forms, including romantic love. The mechanism is very simple: that so long as you have an objective in life or a strong attachment to something which is inconsistent with the flourishing of your ground-state qualities, then because those qualities and their intentionality (which we will call your *dharma*) will be manifesting themselves anyway, you will not be able to achieve your objective; the only objectives that you will be able to achieve (any objective or goal in life, depending clearly on a clarity, a single-pointedness in the direction of that objective), or the only set of objectives you will be able to achieve will be those consistent with your ground-state. Because whatever happens, whatever you do in life, the intentionality and the qualities of your ground-state will always be there. And so long as you have objectives or heteronomies or emotions contrary to your ground-state,

then your intentionality in life will be split and necessarily unfulfilled. So the first step inevitably is towards self-realisation.

But the next step is equally clear, and happens at each point on the first path, the path to self-realisation. This is a commitment, or even just a way of acting, which will necessarily flow from your being clearer in your being as you move towards your ground-state, you will spontaneously act in a way which maximises the possibilities of the self-realisation of all beings. In fact we have already seen that there is no way that you can be fulfilled or even truly free, so long as there are heteronomies or beings which are unrealised outside you, because in so far as you are all interconnected, their heteronomies, constraints will actually preclude you from expressing or fulfilling your *dharma*. For instance if you want to be a musician, you have to presuppose that you are going to be able to have instruments with which to play your music, people to play it with, and people to play into. If any of these conditions are not realised then you will not be fulfilling your *dharma*. This is another way of explicating what I have earlier called the fifth theorem of action. This is that whatever you do, even though you do it necessarily yourself (because it is your action), you will inevitably be affecting in principle all other beings in the universe; and at any rate immediately having an effect on nature, on social interactions with others and at the level of the social structure. Certainly self-realisation in the sense of enlightenment, in the sense of having no heteronomies within yourself is an attainable objective. But even when you are realised you will not be free until all other beings are free. And as you are on the path to realisation, you will be automatically and spontaneously acting so as to liberate, that is to maximise, the possibilities of self-realisation of all other beings.

So we have seen that there is a natural dialectic from any objective you set yourself in life to consistency with your ground-state, i.e. self-realisation. And then that this will automatically lead you to a commitment, whether you realise it theoretically or not, to the self-realisation of all other beings. But as you develop, the more you will experience identification, whether in the form of knowledge, love or action (traditionally known as service) with other beings, until eventually you reach a point at which that

totality, which is the whole cosmic envelope, which is implicit within you, enfolded within you, becomes explicit and at that point it is plausible to say that you are one with the cosmic totality. You have ceased to be just your ground-state but you have actually become one with the cosmic envelope. And this is to put a secular interpretation on what is known as 'god-realisation'.

11. Now we have seen that the condition of possibility of accessing a transcendent other, whether it be a piece of knowledge, the alethic truth of another being in the cosmos, or whether it be the divine, in the form of an epistemically transcendent but ontologically immanent god; or even whether it be interpreted or take the form of a transcendent god, is that you have the possibility of identifying, becoming one, with that which you strive for. Let me put this very concretely. If you believe that god or the divine is transcendent, ontologically, as in the traditional monotheistic religions of Judaism, arguably Christianity, and formally Islam, then you believe that the most fundamental feature or thing about you is your capacity, which defines in our terms your ground-state essence, of conforming to god's will. God's will for you is the most basic feature about you. And this dialectic that we have already seen will take you back to a position in which you earn see that any objective that you have set yourself, which is inconsistent with that most fundamental defining parameter will not be attainable, or sustainable. Now what is this condition of possibility of being one with god's will—there must be something inside you which enables you to become one with god's will. And therefore a transcendent god automatically entails an immanent god, or if you like an immanent divine, a potential that you have to conform with the will of god, a potential which you can actualise, and then you are, that is actually instantiating god's will. So the idea of the completely transcendent divine, which is nevertheless accessible or can play a role in human lives, is not a tenable one. What we are doing when we are seeking to observe god's will is to realise that aspect within ourselves which is in conformity with god's will for us; and in the same way we will be seeking to act in such a way that all other beings in the universe realise god's will for them. In other words the dialectic of self-realisation and universal self-realisation applies here too. When you are totally

at one with god's will, then we have a position which is tantamount again to 'god-realisation', that is to say you will be totally at one with the will of god for the universe. So the dialectic of self-realisation, universal self-realisation and god-realisation applies to transcendent as well as to immanent interpretations of the divine. In both cases what we are concerned with in our human lives is to realise some aspect within ourselves, and clearly that is all we can do. There is no point telling someone to realise an aspect in a cosmos or a universe that he cannot access.

So whatever it is that we want in life, whatever it is we want to do, become, know or love, it will always be a case of ourselves becoming one with that which we want to be or know or love. Let us take the simplest case of knowledge. You are seeking very hard to discover what it is that explains apples falling to the ground, or iron filings being attracted to a magnet or whatever. You are getting nowhere; and you take a break or you stop thinking, you unthink and then suddenly 'eureka', you get it. At that moment there is an identification, something within you has been elicited by a transcendent outside you and/or what has already been awakened within you is allowed to express itself in your consciousness. Whatever happens that truth was, or is at the point of 'eureka', something that was implicit within you. If it was not implicit within you there is no way you could know it. So this is the basis for saying that all knowledge is enfolded within you, and only has to be awakened. In this moment of knowledge you become what it is that you know, you are one with it, just a heightened accentuation of that transcendental identification we must necessarily experience with each other in order to communicate anything at all. In this becoming one with the other, you are the other, and at the level of your ground-states we have, so to speak, one bundle of love becoming one with another bundle of love. So essentially it is *love loving love*. To seek to aspire to become one with the cosmic totality is to seek union with the source of all union and this will inevitably set you on a dialectic at which you will feel you need to become one with all, or all that is grounded in the cosmos, which is one with its ground-state. And this will not be a merely passive mode of relating to the world. Elsewhere we have seen that perception and action at the level of

the ground-state are not easily differentiable, if at all. Be that as it may you will be an active agent in the world, so that once again we have the tri-unity of these three paths of knowledge, of love and of action. And in whatever way your *dharma* or own particular ground-state qualities are inflected, this drive to universal selfrealisation that you experienced on the path to self-realisation will inevitably take you on a drive to union with the alethic truths of all those beings on the cosmic envelope in which you are grounded. Inevitably you will be set on a path to union with the totality, which will be the unfolding of what is already enfolded within you. And so the goal of god-realisation or union with the totality is one which is also implicit like universal realisation or any desire or objective you have in life.

From the point of view of the cosmotheogeny of creation what does this mean? If the only logical way of making sense of a source origin or ultimate ground of the universe is the idea of an ultimatum (or a goal), it must be self-created out of nothing, for if there was something out of which that god was created, then it would not be ultimate. So the beginning or ultimate ground must be self-creation out of nothing. What then is the end or goal state? It must be the becoming one of all, that is the god-realisation of all beings on the cosmic envelope, that is the becoming one with the totality of all elements of the totality. Then of course there would be no duality at all.

12. Let us be a little bit more specific about what this actually entails for human practices. The world of duality is underpinned and sustained by the realm of non-duality. As we become non-dual beings, or approximate or strive towards it, then we still have to perform dualistic actions in the world which is characterised by physical constraints, the world of relativity; and more so because that relative world, the world of duality; the world in which our embodied personalities live and grow and develop, is a world which is dominated not just by duality, but dualism, alienation, contradiction, split, that is oppositional duality, taking the form of all kinds of heteronomies or unfreedoms, constraints on the realisation of beings and on the freedom of realised beings alike. This is the world of the demi-real. Universal self-realisation, or more concretely the construction of a eudaimonistic

society which satisfies the kinds of ideals of Marxian 'communism', namely a society in which the free development of each was the condition of the free development of all, or Mahayana Buddhism, in which no being could be realised, or at least ultimately free, until all beings were; ideals which we have seen are implicit in all emancipatory projects and universalising systems of ethics, involves the dialectic of disemergence, the shedding of all those constraints both inside and outside you. When a society of universally self-realised beings is constructed, then we will have, so to speak, heaven on earth: demi-reality, master–slave relationships, the totality of constraints on the development of human powers and potentialities will be eliminated. This would be the ushering in of such a society which would mark the end of prehistory, and the beginning of a real history. We would now be living in a world in which the zone of non-duality had expanded and was continuing to expand, this would be the beginning of real development and flourishing, unconstrained by blocks which resulted from split human intentionality and any other constraints or sources of heteronomy in being.

13. At this point we would have the disemergence of co-presence, the elimination of heteronomy and the realm of the demi-real. This then would be the level of universal self-realisation, there would still be a world of duality, still be a relative reality, underpinned by the ground-state and the cosmic envelope and the realm of non-duality, but that realm of a relative reality, the realm constituted by our physically embodied personalities would grow and expand and develop in an unconstrained way. This is the dream of all utopias. This is what Jesus probably meant when he talked about the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth. This was one inflection I gave to the term 'god-realisation' in my book *From East to West*.

The other inflection I gave to that term was the actual goal of an individual being, at the level of its ground-state or in consistency with its ground-state becoming one with the totality. This would be god-realisation in another sense. This corresponds presumably to what Jesus meant when he told his disciples that he was going to leave them and join his father, that is become one with god. We have seen that this ideal of becoming one with the

totality is not only a plausible one, but one which is initiated and sustained by the same conatus that takes us to the goal of universal self-realisation. So it cannot be dismissed. If each being in its ground-state becomes one with the totality, then we have a false state of affairs. We not only have individual god-realisation and universal self-realisation manifested in the realm of duality, we also have a state of universal god-realisation. What this would mean is the elimination of relative reality, that is the elimination of duality, and not just dualism and split. What this realm of non-duality alone would be we cannot imagine. For all the models that we have for imaging it would be taken from the realm of relative reality and duality. What we could say is that it would be one of intensely rich blissful experience and unlimited potentiality not even constrained by physical parameters or laws. The world of physical embodiment as we know it would cease to exist. We have then four stages in a dialectic:

[1] Individual self-realisation
[2] Universal self-realisation
[3] Individual god-realisation
[4] Universal god-realisation

Now we can put this perspective in a logically coherent way in the form of what must have been the case in the beginning or if we take time out of it, at the ultimate ground of being, the level of the ultimate. The first moment in this process of creation would be:

(1) Self-creation out of nothing
(2) The generation of a world of duality
(3) The generation of a world of demi-reality, of dualism and split (inevitably proliferating out of this realm of duality).

Then the return or reverse dialectic:

(4) Individual self-realisation

We have seen this to be implicit in any objective you set yourself. We have also seen this to entail a commitment to:

(5) Universal self-realisation.

At this point the dialectic of disemergence, of shedding, of emancipation would usher in the eudaimonistic society and unconstrained flourishing within the realm of duality, of relative reality, a realm bound by constraints of the purely natural and physical parameters of the world.

But we have seen that the drive to union or unity or oneness, or the loss of a sense of separateness from other beings would eventually result whether you conceptualised your activity within the realm of duality cognitively or emotionally or agentively, on the paths of knowledge, love or action; it would inevitably result in the becoming one with the totality, in which your own individuality would go; and we have seen that it would not be a reasonable thing to retain your own individuality if you could have the individuality and powers, that is possibilities of the totality. Who would remain in their ground-state if they could be in every ground-state. But as every ground-state is enfolded within any one ground-state, as a being grows and develops, the cosmic totality enfolded within that being will be explicated, a process continuing until it is fully explicated when he or she or it will be one with it. That is:

(6) individual god-realisation

Exactly the same conatus will apply to every being, until the point of:

(7) Universal god-realisation.

At that point, of universal god-realisation, there would be no more duality, relative reality as we know it would have ceased to exist. And it would be very difficult to differentiate that stage from the initial stage in the dialectic of creation, namely (1)—or rather we could imagine that whatever happened at (7) would eventually result in the renaissance of another act of our autopoesis out of nothing. If the seventh stage saw the extinction of the realm of duality, then we can imagine that eventually there would be another initial stage, a self-creation out of nothing, corresponding to the big bang. And then the seventh stage might be given a secular interpretation such as the black hole. Fortunately my time is running out and I will leave these speculations to the cosmologists of the future.

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ROY BHASKAR

THE PHILOSOPHY OF METAREALITY

Creativity, love and freedom

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION

by Mervyn Hartwig

ROUTLEDGE

The Philosophy of MetaReality

The Philosophy of MetaReality: creativity, love and freedom is the third of three books elaborating Roy Bhaskar's philosophy of metaReality, which appeared in rapid succession in 2002. A big, rich book teaming with ideas, *The Philosophy of MetaReality* is undoubtedly the magnum opus of Bhaskar's spiritual turn.

Building on a radical new analysis of the self, human agency and society, Roy Bhaskar shows how the world of alienation and crisis we currently inhabit is sustained by the ground-state qualities of intelligence, creativity, love, a capacity for right-action and a potential for human self-realisation or fulfilment.

A new introduction to this edition by Mervyn Hartwig, founding editor of *Journal of Critical Realism* and editor of *A Dictionary of Critical Realism* (Routledge, 2007), describes the context, significance and impact of the philosophy of metaReality, and supplies an expert guide to its content. This book is essential reading for students and practitioners of both philosophy and the human sciences.

Roy Bhaskar is the originator of the philosophy of critical realism, and the author of many acclaimed and influential works including *A Realist Theory of Science*, *The Possibility of Naturalism*, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation*, *Dialectic: the pulse of freedom, Plato Etc.*, *From Science to Emancipation* and (with Mervyn Hartwig) *The Formation of Critical Realism*. He is an editor of *Critical Realism: essential readings* and *Interdisciplinarity and Climate Change* and was the founding chair of the Centre for Critical Realism. He is currently a World Scholar at the University of London Institute of Education.

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The Philosophy of MetaReality

Creativity, love and freedom

ROY BHASKAR

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Manifesto

MetaReality is a new philosophical position devised by Roy Bhaskar, originator of the influential, international and multidisciplinary philosophy of critical realism. It accepts but goes beyond critical realism, insofar as it pinpoints the reality of non-dual states and phases of being, showing how they underpin and sustain the totality of all forms of human, and indeed all, life. Understanding *metaReality* is to realise the limitations of the world of duality.

Critical realism already understands reality as structured and differentiated, as in process and changing, as a totality or whole and as containing human, potentially self-conscious, transformative agency. The world that humankind has made and which we currently inhabit is a world of duality: of unhappiness, oppression and strife—more especially, it is a world in which we are alienated from ourselves, each other, the activities in which we engage and the natural world we inhabit, currently hurtling into crisis and self-destruction.

The philosophy of *metaReality* describes the way in which this very world nevertheless depends upon, that is, is ultimately sustained by and exists only in virtue of the free, loving, creative, intelligent energy and activity of non-dual states of our being and

phases of our activity. In becoming aware of this we begin the process of transforming and overthrowing the totality of structures of oppression, alienation, mystification and misery we have produced; and the vision opens up of a balanced world and of a society in which the free development and flourishing of each unique human being is understood to be the condition, as it is also the consequence, of the free development and flourishing of all.

In developing this vision the philosophy of *metaReality* confirms and re-presents many aspects of the vision of the great philosophical traditions of the past, but does so in a radically new way, apt for contemporary times. We begin this process of becoming free, that is, of expanding the zone of non-duality within our lives, by becoming aware of all the elements that currently constitute them and throwing off all those elements which are inconsistent with our free, creative, loving natures. In this process we come to realise that the very world of misery and destitution we have created itself contains and is sustained by the seeds of a society of abundance, peace and fulfilment, in which we are all free to express and fulfil our essential natures.

Introduction

Acronyms

CM	classical modernism
CN	critical naturalism
CR	critical realism
DCR	dialectical critical realism
EC	explanatory critique
HM	high modernism
M	the theory and practice of modernisation
MELDARA or MELDARZ	the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain or self-structuration of being
PDM	the philosophical discourse of modernity
PM	postmodernism
PMR	the philosophy of metaReality
TDCR	transcendental dialectical critical realism
T/F	bourgeois triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism
TR	transcendental realism

The Philosophy of MetaReality: creativity, love and freedom is the third of three books elaborating Roy Bhaskar's philosophy of metaReality (PMR),[1] which appeared in rapid succession in 2002.[2] I have set out my global understanding of the new philosophy and the arguments for it in an introduction to *Reflections on MetaReality*,[3] which I will not repeat here except to say that I take its fundamental message to be that if we humans are to freely flourish in a sustainable way we will have to get back into tune with nature understood as a totality profoundly interconnected at the level of the real, acting 'from the perspective of the whole totality', i.e. 'the whole of the universe'.[4] However, for the convenience of the reader I reproduce the tables that accompanied that essay, which I believe are valuable aids to understanding

---

[1] A note on terminology: 'MetaReality' and cognate terms were originally spelt with a hyphen: 'Meta-Reality' (at the beginning of a sentence); otherwise, 'meta-Reality', including within titles and chapter headings (with the exception of *Reflections on Meta-Reality*). In future publications Roy Bhaskar has decided to dispense with the hyphen and to capitalise the first letter of 'metaReality' in titles and chapter headings. I have accordingly followed suit here.

[2] Roy Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality: Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life*, London: Routledge, [2002] 2012; *From Science to Emancipation: Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment*, London: Routledge, [2002] 2012; and *The Philosophy of meta-Reality*, Volume I, *Creativity, Love and Freedom*, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks and London: Sage, 2002, reissued herewith as *The Philosophy of MetaReality: Creativity, Love and Freedom*. Unattributed page numbers in what follows refer to *The Philosophy of MetaReality*.

[3] Mervyn Hartwig, 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality*, vii–xxvii. See also my 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, which comments on the specific contribution of that book.

[4] Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, 250–1; cf. 'in the end the only vantage point is . . . the totality' (*The Philosophy of MetaReality*, 329). The ancient philosophical theme of reconciliation with nature is currently being resumed, from different perspectives, by secularly minded mainstream Western philosophers. See e.g. Mark Johnston, *Saving God: Religion after Idolatry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009 and *Surviving Death*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010; Thomas Nagel, 'Secular philosophy and the religious temperament', in *Secular Philosophy and the Religious Temperament: Essays 2002–2008*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 3–18; Galen Strawson, 'Religion is a sin', *London Review of Books* 33(11), 2011, 26–8. Unlike Johnston and Strawson, PMR leaves open the question of whether the absolute is transcendent to the universe as well as immanent within it – whether what Bhaskar calls the cosmic envelope or

Bhaskar's philosophy and grasping its coherent systematicity, whether considered synchronically or diachronically. These are grouped together at the end of the present essay, the main focus of which will be on the presentational dialectics of *The Philosophy of MetaReality*.

A big, rich book teaming with ideas, *The Philosophy of MetaReality* is undoubtedly the magnum opus of Bhaskar's spiritual turn. It systematically rethematises the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain ('the self-structuration of being' (p. 117)) as elaborated by critical realism – being as such (1M), becoming (2E), totality (3L), intentional transformative agency (4D) and spirituality (5A) – in the light of an understanding of being as also (re-)enchanted and as possessing an absolute foundational or non-dual level or field of possibility, that of the ground-state and cosmic envelope, and it explicitly adds (pp. xix–xx, 275f.) two further stadia encompassing that understanding: (re-)enchantment (6R) and non-duality (7A or 7Z), where 'R' signifies, not just 're-enchantment' but the always-already enchanted 'resonance' of being (p. 285), 'A' signifies 'awakening' to non-duality and 'Z' its transcendental experience, when, as the saying goes, we are 'in the zone'.[5] Omission of the

---

ground of the universe itself has a ground or creator. In a remarkable performative contradiction, the current 'speculative turn' in continental philosophy, which embraces returns to realism and/or materialism and is on its own account fundamentally driven by the reality principle asserting itself in the guise of the ecological and other crises besetting humanity, seems to be oriented, by and large, against the notion of reconciliation; see e.g. Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman, eds, *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, Melbourne: re.press, 2011, open access: www.re-press.org/book-files/OA_Version_Speculative_Turn _97809806 68346.pdf. As one of the speculative turn's leading luminaries, Slavoj Žižek, avers: 'New Age bullshitters are telling us we have lost contact with nature. I say: no we haven't lost *enough* contact with nature . . . we should not only denaturalise nature but ourselves' (cited in Stuart Jeffries, 'A life in writing: Slavoj Žižek', *The Guardian*, London, 15 July 2011).

[5] (Re-)enchantment and non-duality were thematised in *Reflections* and *From Science to Emancipation* but not explicitly accorded the status of distinct stadia of the ontological–axiological chain, except in the Preface of *From Science to Emancipation*, written at the same time as *The Philosophy of meta-Reality* (the first four months of 2002), which announced (p. xv) that the then forthcoming *The Philosophy of meta-Reality* accords them distinct status.

numerals yields the acronyms MELDARA and MELDARZ, designating the self-structuration of being as a whole – which could equally well have been called MELDARG, 'since the seventh zone or awakening is the ultimate ground, mode of constitution and fine structure of all the others' (p. 113). Thus the Bhaskarian system comes full circle as non-duality (identity with a rich potential for differentiation) at 7A/Z is seen to underlie and sustain duality (non-identity) at 1M.[6]

This systematic deepening of ontology, which intends above all 'to encourage you to be as true to yourself as you can' (p. 98), that is self-realised, enlightened or free, is reflected in the architectonic of the book, which may be represented in summary form as (where 'rethematised' stands for 'rethematised in the light of enchantment and non-duality'):

Preface	1M–7A
Chapter 1	7A/Z the zone or awakening of non-duality
Chapter 2	1M being, rethematised
Chapter 3	2E becoming, rethematised
Chapter 4	3L totality, rethematised
Chapter 5	4D intentional transformative agency, rethematised
	5A spirituality, rethematised (developed to 7A/Z)
Chapter 6	6R (re-)enchantment
Chapter 7	1M–7A

The Preface rehearses the main themes and structure of the volume as a whole, and is thus concerned with all seven stadia. Chapter 1 is fundamentally about 7A/Z in that its emphasis is on thematising the main modes in which non-duality underpins the dual world we inhabit (i.e. as its ground, mode of constitution and fine structure or deep interior) and its mechanisms of unification or identification (transcendental identification in consciousness, reciprocity and co-presence). It argues that the supramental consciousness of the foundational level of the universe 'is primary, or as primary as matter, and underpins all our states of activity;

[6] Cf. Hartwig, 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *Reflections*, x, xiv.

and that implicitly every being in the world is conscious';[7] moreover, that transcendence of duality is a pervasive reality in human action and social life and that 'the process of enlightenment is a natural extension' of this always-already quotidian transcendence (p. xxvii). The main theme of each of the four ensuing chapters, which are organised in terms of the sequence of the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain, is then given by what is necessary for enlightenment or self-realisation at that level, the categories of which are also rethematised and deepened more generally in the light of (re-)enchantment and non-duality. Overall, this progressive examination of the nature of transcendence[8] reveals inter alia a 'general and necessary' logic of emancipatory discourse positing a primary or essential level of potential that has come to be dominated and occluded by an emergent oppressive level that is unilaterally dependent on the primary level and must be thrown off for free flourishing to proceed (pp. xxvii, 51–2, 314f.) It is this logic, I have suggested elsewhere, that drives Bhaskar's system past realism to metaRealism.[9]

Chapter 2 accordingly argues that, for self-realisation to be possible, we must as embodied personalities literally shed or lose our ego, which is an illusion, learning how to act consistently with, or better in and from, our transcendentally real self or ground-state; and it rethematises ontology at the level of the real (1M) more generally from the perspective of the ground-state. On this conception, the human real self, in virtue of generalised co-presence or the holistic enfolding of everything within everything else at the level of alethic truth, is potentially coterminous with the multiverse:

---

[7] This should not be read as implying a dualism of matter and consciousness. Bhaskar espouses a stratified or emergentist monism. There is ultimately only one kind of stuff with a rich potential for differentiation, which could be designated mass-energy-information – a position broadly in accord with a great deal of modern physics. See e.g. Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, London: Routledge, 2010, 99–100, 186, 203.

[8] 'In Chapters 1 to 5 of this book we examined progressively the nature of transcendence' (p. 299).

[9] Hartwig, 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, xv.

> Self-consciousness, properly understood, is consciousness by the embodied personality of the consciousness of the transcendentally real self witnessing it; but it also connotes, with the loss of a sense of ego consequent upon self-realisation, the increasing reflexivity made possible by an expanded embodied personality, an expanded sense of self in the relative field of existence; and the totality which is awakened with it, a totality which is potentially infinite for any one being at any one moment of time, and potentially infinite for that being, in any respect, over time.
>
> (p. 6, n.2)

Lest this 'unlimited self' (p. 32 et passim) encourage anthropic conceit, it should be noted that, in an open unfolding universe in which the processes of evolution are doubtless themselves evolving, this is potentially true of any being, e.g. an amoeba, not just a human being (pp. 26, 127, 324–5). The principle of the primacy of subject-referentiality espoused by PMR is so called, of course, precisely because at the level of the unlimited self 'we have *subject-referentiality,* not *object-referentiality*' (p. 250, original emphasis) and because this self is 'the ultimate source of our causal agency in the world' (p. 37) and we can only ever act through ourselves.

> Ultimately to be a reflexive being you must be able to adopt the first-person standpoint for every being in creation, that is to say you must overcome every egocentricity, every binary oppositionality within and between yourself, your class, your caste, your occupation and the rest of the world, and you must overcome the binary opposition between god and yourself or the rest of the world.
>
> (pp. 309–10)

Chapter 3 contends that, to achieve self-realisation, we must also clear our minds and unthink, losing our misidentification of the powers of consciousness with those of the mind and the ego and learning to see ourselves, not as subjects set over against an object world but as constitutive parts of an organic whole. This involves carrying through Bhaskar's critique of the discursive intellect, inaugurated in the earlier metaReality volumes: the

discursive intellect, which views being in dualistic terms, must be complemented by the intuitive intellect, and both must be understood as underpinned by the supramental consciousness of the ground-state, which is the highest form of consciousness and the inexhaustible source of all creativity – although thought is enormously powerful in geo-history, 'nothing creative ever comes from thought' as such (p. 163); genuine creativity (as those who have exercised it in high degree have often understood) involves 'draw[ing] back the curtains of our thinking mind, and lift[ing] the veil of time, to let the presence of our ground-state consciousness into present moment awareness and activity' (p. 105). More generally the chapter rethematises the main 2E categories of absence and becoming, creativity and emergence.

The theme of Chapter 4 is the clearing of our emotions as a condition of self-realisation in the context of a rethematisation of the categories of totality (3L) around the power of love as the ultimately unifying force in the universe and 'the most basic characterisation of our emotional being, in its purest, ground-state form' (p. 179) – the fundamental source of all our emotions, including the negative emotions, which are both parasitic on some rudimentary form of love and depend on love's absence or incompleteness. As a philosophy of unity, the philosophy of metaReality is 'above all a philosophy of love' (p. 185). This chapter should be read in conjunction with the superb meditation on love that concludes *From Science to Emancipation*.[10]

In Chapter 5, which rethematises human action as 'giving and being as from an infinite sea of pure potentiality' (p. 263, n. 14) and 'the primary social act' as the gift (pp. xxxv, 175, 255), the focus is inter alia on losing our stubborn belief, bound up with our concretely singular embodiedness, in 'the exhaustive physicality of being' (p. 237) and on transcending the presence of the past or 'fate' as a condition of spontaneous right-action – i.e. action that is spontaneously dharmic (in or from our ground-state), hence virtuous and, in an ever expanding field, reflexively self-aware – and hence, ceteris paribus, of fulfilled intentionality (4D).

[10] Bhaskar, *From Science to Emancipation*, Ch. 13, 'Unconditionality in love', 339–63. See also my commentary on it in the new introduction to that volume.

Such spontaneous transcendental or non-dual agency is 'mindless' or without thought. It results with practice from another form of non-dual agency, 'mindful' or focused activity in which '[y]our consciousness is not something apart from your activity, it is *in* activity. And in the holistic field of your awareness in activity, you are *in* the field of your awareness. And if you were not, your activity would be impossible' (pp. 235–6, original emphasis).[11] This reflexive account of action is mirrored in the account of perception in Chapter 6 (pp. 293–9).

Because 'it is here developed to 7A' (p. xx), no separate chapter is devoted to spirituality (5A), i.e. the spirituality presupposed by emancipatory projects, whether religious or secular, as thematised in transcendental dialectical critical realism,[12] which 'consists of reflection on reflexivity, "the inwardised form of totality", as . . . thematise[d] . . . already in *Dialectic'*, issuing in 'a prediscursive sense of nature as spiritual'.[13]

Chapter 6 then expounds the world as always already enchanted and its disenchantment as an illusion effected by the smog of the demi-real, and rethematises 1M–5A in light of this. That the world is enchanted, i.e. intrinsically meaningful, valuable, processual or creative and spiritual,[14] is entailed by 7A/Z

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[11] For a similar account of skilled human activity, see Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, London: Routledge, 2011. However, Ingold does not have an explicit concept of the ground-state, tends to reduce the intrinsic properties of objects to the domain of the actual and, unlike Bhaskar, does not ground his account in a critique of the way in which the philosophical discourse of modernity, in de-totalising the observer from the world in which they must act, renders holistic, reflexive human agency unthinkable.

[12] See Roy Bhaskar, *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul*, London: Routledge, 2000.

[13] Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, '(Re-)contextualising metaReality', in Mervyn Hartwig and Jamie Moran, eds, *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, London: Routledge, 2012, 206–17, at 211; Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, London: Routledge, [1993] 2008, 273, 302, 403.

[14] 'Spiritual' here does duty for the notion that the 'ordinary things' of the world are 'in essence transcendental, i.e. non-dual and show reciprocity and contain implicit totality, i.e. enfolded co-presence of everything else' and that 'there is more to the world than ordinary things' as understood by the disenchanting gaze of capitalist modernity (p. 287).

non-duality, i.e. by the collapse of the dualities of subject and object, fact and value, subject and predicate and sacred and profane effected by the critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity,[15] but 'the world of enchantment . . . is real independently of any demonstration of . . . its existence', and so must be treated as sui generis and accorded a distinct stadion in the chain of being (p. 276). The world we inhabit is 'constituted by [emergent] levels of mind, emotion and supramental or transcendental consciousness as well as physical reality', incorporating 'direct mind-to-mind (feeling-to-feeling, etc.) causality, action and modes of connection, so as to generate a concept *of n-dimensionally generalised four-planar social being*'. But, given the real illusion of disenchantment in capitalist modernity, it will take '*new ways of being*, *new ways of seeing* and *new ways of acting*' to awaken with a jump in our being[16] to the world in the full panoply of its enchantment (pp. 277–8, original emphasis). As Bhaskar is aware (p. 298), this conception has much in common with the 'animic ontology' of non-civilisational worldviews,[17] but it actually takes its departure from modern science and critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity, and seeks, not to return us to the worldview of our early ancestors, but to articulate

[15] See Mervyn Hartwig, 'Bhaskar's critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity', *Journal of Critical Realism* 10(4) 2011, 485–510.

[16] Apologies to Dermot Healy, who speaks of 'the jump in the feet' that great literature gives us (Sean O'Hagen, 'Dermot Healy: "I try to stay out of it and let the reader take over"', *The Observer*, London, 3 April 2011). For Bhaskar, as I think for Healy, the whole world is a text (this is the truth of poststructuralism and postmodernism (p. 303)) that gives us the jump if we read it rightly or, better, if we awaken to the non-duality in the 'spontaneous right perception' (pp. 9, 279) we always already enjoy.

[17] See in particular Ingold, *Being Alive*, 63, 71, 74 et passim. Unlike Ingold, whose animic ontology embraces master–slave-type or post-Axial societies prior to modernity as we know it as well as non-civilisational peoples, Bhaskar distinguishes the 'semi-enchantment' of the civilisational discourses of religion from the 'enchantment' of non-civilisational discourses (pp. 285, 308). Ingold's worldview, unlike the Bhaskarian, incorporates a decidedly anti-science stance; on the Bhaskarian account creative science, properly understood, reveals the enchantment of the world and is itself a 'practical mysticism', i.e. incorporates a moment of absolute transcendence to non-duality in making its discoveries.

a spirituality that is in keeping with twenty-first-century scientific rationality and the presuppositions of emancipatory projects.[18] This chapter gives us the fullest account of enchantment in the Bhaskarian oeuvre to date.

The thematics of Chapter 7, the last, are given, fittingly, by unity and unification. The first three sections basically resume the arguments for PMR and effect a unification of human aspirations to free flourishing: humanity has only ever had one objective, that of universal self-realisation, an objective that is implicit in human praxis and presupposed by all emancipatory discourses, whether secular or religious. The theory of generalised co-presence and the 'attractive pull in the evolutionary process' provided by the deep interior of beings,[19] furthermore, entail the possibility, in the remote future, of universal god-realisation, a universal becoming one of all beings with totality, implying 'a radical historicisation of our conceptions of the evolutionary process', including our conceptions of self-realisation (pp. 324–5). Section 4 then effects a unification of the critical realist and metaRealist critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity (a critique resumed in Section 6 on the metacritique of Marx's critique of Hegel) and of institutionalised religion. Section 5 effects a unification of the

[18] See Hartwig, 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *Reflections*, xxi; Mervyn Hartwig and Jamie Morgan, eds, *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, London: Routledge, 2011, esp. Part III, 'Spirituality and metaReality'.

[19] The Bhaskarian forms of unity or identification (modes in which non-duality sustains duality) – ground, mode of constitution and deep interior or fine structure – can be thought of as corresponding to the trinity in modern physics of irreducible yet inseparable aspects of the material world – mass, energy and information – which in turn, according to some Christian theologians, formally map on to the holy trinity of Father, Holy Ghost and Son respectively (Niels Henrik Gregersen, 'God, matter, and information: towards a Stoicizing Logos christology', in Paul Davies and Niels Henrik Gregersen, eds, *Information and the Nature of Reality: From Physics to Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 319–48). How much significance should be attached to this is an open question. As Table 4 indicates, within Bhaskar's philosophy the forms of unity correspond to the 'holy' trinity of critical realism (ontological realism, epistemic relativity and judgemental rationality) as well as to the domains of reality (the real, the actual and the empirical/conceptual). 'Holy' here puns on 'holes', i.e. absences.

various explanatory accounts (sociological, philosophical, etc.) we have of religion, all of which construe it as effecting a greater totality of some kind, before moving on to effect 'a great unity within the philosophy of comparative religion'[20] – a unity of transcendent and immanent, absolute and relative approaches; and a unity between religious and secular discourses of emancipation, arriving at 'a remarkable conclusion: whatever objective you want; whatever religious tradition you subscribe to; whatever emancipatory tradition you identify with; whatever practice you engage in; whatever community or belief or sensibility or location you belong to, [t]hey all point to a single path', the path of universal self- and god-realisation (p. 350). Finally, Section 7 effects a unity of PMR itself and its radical refashioning of the prior moments of critical realism. The volume ends with a brief consideration of humanity's prospects for emancipation in the current conjuncture which, although dire in that 'the very survival of our physical environment is at stake', in one respect have never been better: with the demise of the Soviet bloc there is only one demi-real system of oppression and exploitation in the world and only one genuine alternative to it: 'the realisation and flowering of its non-dual basis or grounds' (p. 364).

Bhaskar describes PMR as

> not really even a system of thought, but an intervention in the discursive process which is designed to enable agents to reflexively situate their own non-dual being in the context of their growth and development in the dual realm and their struggles in the dualistic realm which dominates and

[20] This section of the chapter (pp. 333–53) is particularly valuable because it is all we have as yet of Bhaskar's project to write a book on comparative religion (see note 23, below). Andrew Wright claims that Bhaskar's unification of comparative religion 'constitutes a denial of the specific ontological truth claims of particular religious traditions', but that does not follow: the absolute may manifest in different ways to different people, and people will have their own preferred modes of access to and perspectives on it. See Andrew Wright, 'Beyond fundamentalism: spiritual realism, spiritual literacy and education', in Hartwig and Morgan, eds, *Critical Realism and Spirituality*, 75–89, at 83; Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, 'Beyond East and West', in ibid., 187–202, at 194.

> screens or occludes not only the relative world of duality but the absolute non-dual world on which it entirely reposes.
>
> (p. xxiv)

By this he wishes to underline, not that PMR is not a system of philosophy, which it most certainly is, but that it 'engages as much a polemic against thought, and the ego, and the products of thought and the ego, as it does against subject–object duality as such' and that it is a philosophy of truth rather than of reality, a metaRealism rather than a realism (pp. xxiii–xxiv). One aspect of this, novel in terms of both Bhaskar's oeuvre and philosophical convention, is that on several occasions the normally unobtrusive author, frustrated by the 'alienated hostility'[21] with which the spiritual turn was greeted within the critical realist community, appeals directly to the reader in an attempt to alert them to the possibility that something important is going on here: 'Prolegomenon to Chapter Three**:** Don't Think You Are Who You Think You Are' (pp. 87–8) and 'Prelude to Chapter Four: So You Think Non-duality is Unusual**?**—Or, Are You Paying Attention (Listening [to Me, Reader]**?**)' (pp. 167–71). Another aspect is that several of the chapters incorporate short exercises or 'Work Ins' (pp. 96, 152–66). The rationale behind both of these ad hominem presentational tactics is that one really has to work at appropriating a new philosophy[22] and take seriously the idea that genuine novelty emerges in the gaps or silences between thoughts.

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[21] The phrase is Jamie Morgan's ('Ontological casuistry? Bhaskar's metaReality, fine structure, and human disposition', *New Formations* 56(1), 2005, 133–46, at 133).

[22] Bhaskar originally planned a whole book of exercises as one of three companions to the present volume he sketched in detail in 2001–2, then set aside owing to circumstances beyond his control. These were *The Philosophy of meta-Reality*, Volume 2, *Between East and West: Comparative Religion and Spirituality in an Age of Global Crisis*; *The Philosophy of meta-Reality*, Volume 3, *Re-enchanting Reality: A Critique of Modernity and Modernisation*; and *The Philosophy of meta-Reality*, Volume 4, *Work In: A Manual*. Bhaskar is very keen (personal communication July 2011) to return to this project, though not necessarily in that form, after writing a short introduction to PMR. *Work In* would have priority.

Though alienated hostility has abated somewhat, many readers will doubtless still find some of the claims Bhaskar makes in this book extravagant, in particular perhaps some of those conjugating around the notions of reciprocity and generalised co-presence, e.g. that humans could significantly impact the deep evolutionary processes of the multiverse. But, first, Bhaskar concedes that such effects may be small.[23] Second, they are in line with the notion of a 'participatory' universe in some quarters of contemporary physics[24] and in deep ecology, as is the notion that being is suffused with consciousness in some sense. Third, their reality actually follows from the premise that the universe is a holistic totality in which everything is enfolded within, or infinitely correlated with, everything else at the level of fundamental possibility (for the cosmic envelope is concretely singularised within every being as its ground-state), and the onus is on the objectors to show that this premise is faulty. Bhaskar at several points likens the field of infinite correlation – the domain of Baudelaire's *correspondances*[25] – to a 'cosmic computer' which, through 'evolutionary mechanisms' of 'attraction', 'synthesis' and 'economy', guides the unfolding of being (pp. 188, 252; see also Table 4, below) – a notion that is also currently receiving some support in physics.[26] Finally, PMR is undoubtedly a very radical philosophy that challenges at every point the fundamental assumptions of the philosophical discourse of modernity. As I have tried to show elsewhere, it definitively transcends the

[23] Roy Bhaskar with Mervyn Hartwig, *The Formation of Critical Realism*, 184–5.
[24] E.g. Henry Stapp, 'Minds and values in the quantum universe', in Davies and Gregersen, eds, *Information and the Nature of Reality*, 104–20.
[25] Charles Baudelaire, *Correspondances*, http://fleursdumal.org/poem/103. Cf. Walter Benjamin, 'The image of Proust', in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, London: Pimlico, 197–210, at 206. Benjamin appears to have held, like Bhaskar, that human emancipation presupposes that the world is enchanted and has a metaReal basis; cf. George Markus, 'Benjamin's critique of aesthetic autonomy', in A. Benjamin and C. Rice, eds, *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, Melbourne: re.press, 2009, 111–28.
[26] See. e.g. Seth Lloyd, 'The computational universe', in Davies and Gregersen, eds, *Information and the Nature of Reality*, 92–103.

dialectical antagonism of the bourgeois enlightenment and its romantic response,[27] to which it might be added that it carries through what is in effect a revolution against the postmetaphysical turn[28] in philosophy inaugurated by Kant,[29] a revolution that was set in motion by Bhaskar's first book more than thirty years ago, and which currently has a (somewhat ragbag, protean and lagged) counterpart in avant-garde continental philosophy that has rediscovered the 'real world' now that the reality principle is asserting itself in the form of global crises at all four planes of human social being.[30] This is no return to traditional foundationalist metaphysics but a turn to a metaphysics that deploys relatively a priori arguments that take on board some data from the sciences, for which it underlabours and with which it is in

[27] Hartwig, 'Introduction' to Bhaskar, *Reflections on MetaReality*, xxi–xxii.

[28] In marked contrast to Ken Wilber's *Integral Spirituality*, which tries to vindicate religion and spirituality by rendering them *compatible* with postmetaphysics and postmodernism (*Integral Spirituality: A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World*, Boston and London: Integral Books, 2006).

[29] For detailed analysis of the way in which the Kantian paradigm has dominated the trajectory both of continental and of analytical philosophy, see Lee Braver, *A Thing of This World: A History of Continental Anti-Realism*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007. Braver claims that the later Heidegger, though living in its shadow, 'breaks free of Kant's thought' to establish a new paradigm: 'If truth is unconcealment, then Heidegger is no longer sorting out false appearances from true reality; abandoning the reality–appearance distinction marks what he calls the end of metaphysics' (p. 9); but Derrida's diagnosis, as summarised by Braver, that 'Heidegger's very attempt to go outside of the history of metaphysics . . . locks him . . . firmly inside of it', seems more apt, and Braver's conclusion that Derrida himself 'succeeds in escaping metaphysics by problematising the very idea of escape' (p. 10) is indeed 'paradoxical', as he concedes. Of course, what is mainly at issue for Derrida is the 'metaphysics of presence', the fount of which is devastatingly critiqued by Bhaskar as ontological monovalence, the view that being is purely positive (see Bhaskar, *Dialectic* and *Plato Etc.: The Problems of Philosophy and their Resolution* (London: Routledge [1994] 2010); Alan Norrie, *Dialectic and Difference: Dialectical Critical Realism and the Grounds of Justice* (London: Routledge, 2010)). Critical realism and metaRealism move beyond both the realism and anti-realism of the mainline that Braver is concerned with.

[30] See Bryant, Srnicek and Harman, eds, *The Speculative Turn*.

profound dialogue.[31] It is a revolution brilliantly caught in a Bhaskarian aphorism that also encapsulates the philosophy of metaReality: 'It is not that there are the starry heavens above and the moral law within, as Kant would have it; rather, the true basis of your virtuous existence is the fact that the starry heavens are within you, and you are within them' (p. 351).[32]

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[31] The classic statement of Bhaskar's main method of transcendental critique is Roy Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation* (London: Routledge, [1986] 2009), Ch. 1.3, 'Metaphysics and method' (pp. 10–27).

[32] Those who find this intuitively implausible might reflect that according to modern science the fundamental elements ingredient in our bodies were forged in the stars.

Table 1 The moments of the philosophy of critical realism and metaReality mapped to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain and the twofold process of immanent critique

Stadion/Moment	*1M Non-identity*	*2E Negativity*	*3L Totality*	*4D Transformative agency*	*5A Spirituality*	*6R (Re-) enchantment*	*7A/Z Non-duality*
CR/PMR as a whole: thinking being	as such and in general	as process + as for 1M	as a totality + as for 2E	as incorporating transformative praxis and reflexivity + as for 3L	as incorporating a spiritual or a transcendental dimension + as for 4D	as incorporating enchantment + as for 5A	as incorporating non-duality + as for 6R
Form of reflexivity – immanent critique of PDM + CR	classical modernism	high modernism + 1M	modernization theory + 1M, 2E	postmodernism + 1M, 2E, 3L	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A	
TR: thinking being as	**structured** and **differentiated**						
CN inflection: thinking being as	containing mind and concepts	**negativity, dualism, contradiction, emergence**					
EC inflection: thinking being as	intrinsically valuable	negativity qua absenting constraints (ills)	totality as including **values** (retotalization)				

DCR inflection: thinking being as	alethic truth (reality principle, axiological necessity); underlying identity-in-difference; co-presence; the pulse of freedom	negativity qua (determinate) absence, generalized to the whole of being as real, primary to presence and essential to change	totality maximized by praxis (which absents incompleteness); dialectical universalizability; unity-in-diversity	transformative praxis and **reflexivity** (the unity of theory and practice in practice, emancipatory axiology)	
TDCR inflection: thinking being as	underlying identity-in-difference – transcendentally real self and God (the absolute) as the truth or ground of reality; co-presence	transcendence (the achievement of identity or unity in a total context) as essential to change and the rational kernel of any learning process; creativity	unconditional love	spontaneous right-action (realization of reflexivity, i.e. self-realization)	**spirituality** fulfilled intentionality; universal self-realization; reflexivity generalized as cosmic consciousness

(*Continued*)

Table 1—continued

Stadion/Moment	*1M Non-identity*	*2E Negativity*	*3L Totality*	*4D Transformative agency*	*5A Spirituality*	*6R (Re-) enchantment*	*7A/Z Non-duality*
PMR inflection: the spiritual exposition of being – thinking being as	underlying identity-in-difference (implicitly conscious) – ground-state and cosmic envelope (the absolute, non-duality, metaReality) as the truth or ground of reality; generalized co-presence	transcendence as ubiquitous in everyday life; transcendental identification in consciousness;* transcendental emergence (creativity)	unconditional love; transcendental holism or teamwork; synchronicity	spontaneous right-action (transcendental agency); practical mysticism; dialectically universalized synchronicity	spirituality as a necessary condition of every-day life; universal self-realization	**enchantment*** – being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred; generalized hermeneutics and semiotics; enhanced human perception and hermeneutical powers	(awakening of) **non-duality**; being being (cosmic consciousness, at-homeness); human creative powers unbound (the unlimited self)

* Introduced in TDCR but not nearly so fully thematized and argued for.

Note: This is a modified version of M. Hartwig, 'Introduction', *Dictionary of Critical Realism*, ed. M. Hartwig (London: Routledge, 2007), Table 1, pp. xvi–xvii. 'Moments' are the phases of the philosophical system as they develop diachronically. 'Stadia' are the fundamental features of the ontological–axiological chain, or the self-structuration of being, as apprehended in the system. Why they are designated 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A, 6R and 7A/Z is explained in M. Hartwig, 'MELD', *Dictionary*, Hartwig (ed.), pp. 295–303. Apart from the fact that 7A/Z and 6R are both elaborated by PMR, it will be seen that the individual stadia of this schema (columns) correspond to the (main emphasis of) the developing moments of the system (rows). This means that (to take the example of PMR), in thinking being *primarily* as non-duality, PMR necessarily also thinks it as enchantment, spirituality, right-action, love, creativity and identity-in-difference; and so on for the other moments. The main emphasis or focus of each moment is indicated in bold, and may be taken as indicating the chief aporia in the previous phase that it remedies.

Table 2 The philosophical discourse of modernity and the critical realist and metaRealist critique

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM)		*The Critical Realist and MetaRealist Critique*		
Moment of PDM	**Defining characteristics**	**Corresponding CR/PMR concepts and critique**	**Moment of CR/PMR**	**Main stadion and concept(s): understanding being as**
Classical modernism (CM)	(1) ego-, anthropo-centricity or -centrism, etc. (atomism) (2) abstract universality (actualism, irrealism) (both underpinned by the epistemic fallacy) 'the intrinsic exterior'	the self as social and interrelated at a fundamental level with the cosmos; dialectical universality	TR	1M non-identity; being as structured, differentiated and changing; holy trinity: judgemental rationality, epistemic relativism, ontological realism
High modernism (HM)	(3) incomplete totality (critique of CM) (follows from (2)) (4) lack of reflexivity (critique of CM) (follows from (3))	open totality, reflexivity; critiques HM's substitutionism, elitism, reductive materialism	CN	2E process, including absence or negativity and contradiction; emergence; irreducibility of mind

(*Continued*)

Table 2—continued

The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (PDM)		*The Critical Realist and MetaRealist Critique*		
Moment of PDM	**Defining characteristics**	**Corresponding CR/PMR concepts and critique**	**Moment of CR/PMR**	**Main stadion and concept(s) understanding being as**
Modernisation theory and practice (M)	(5) unilinearity (5′) judgementalism (5″) disenchantment	multilinearity, open systems; dialogue; (re-) enchantment	EC	3L totality; internal relationality, holistic causality, explanatory critique
Postmodernism (PM)	(6) formalism and (6′) functionalism (critique of PDM, stressing identity and difference, and rejecting universality) (7) materialism (critique of PDM)	accepts difference but reinstates unity or (dialectical) universality (connection) and critiques PM's judgemental irrationalism and lack of a concept of emancipation	DCR	4D transformative agency, reflexivity, emancipatory axiology, unity-in-diversity

Triumphalism and endism/ renascent fundamentalism (T/F)	(8) ontological monovalence (a purely positive account of reality, denegating change)	ontological polyvalence, the reality of absence; accentuated critique of materialism (implicit consciousness pervades being); critique of subject–object duality; false absolute of market and other fundamentalisms	TDCR	5A spirituality, the absolute (God); universal self-realisation; co-presence; transcendence
			PMR	6R enchantment, being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred 7A/Z non-duality (primacy of unity and identity over difference) or the absolute (ground-state and cosmic envelope) – infinite or unending possibility; generalised co-presence; transcendence

Note: Columns should be read vertically (developmentally), such that (broadly) T/F > PM > M > HM > CM, and PMR > TDCR > DCR > EC > CN > TR.

Table 3 Key concepts of PMR mapped to the stadia of the ontological–axiological chain

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR > CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/ CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/ PMR*
Thinking being	as *such and in general*	as *process* + as for 1M	as *a whole* + as for 2E	as *praxis* + as for 3L	as *spiritual* + as for 4D	as *enchanted* + as for 5A	as *non-dual* + as for 6R
Form of reflexivity – immanent critique of PDM + CR	classical modernism	high modernism + 1M	modernization theory + 1M, 2E	postmodernism + 1M, 2E, 3L	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D	triumphalism and endism/ fundamentalism + 1M, 2E, 3L, 4D, 5A	
Key PMR concepts	underlying identity-in-difference (implicitly conscious) – ground-state and cosmic envelope (the absolute, non-duality, metaReality) as	transcendence as ubiquitous in everyday life; transcendental identification in consciousness; transcendental emergence (creativity); accentuation	unconditional love; transcendental holism or teamwork; unification, unity; reciprocity, synchronicity; generalization of four-planar social	spontaneous right-action (transcendental agency); practical mysticism; dialectically universalized synchronicity	spirituality as a necessary condition of everyday life; fulfilled intentionality; primacy of self-referentiality; universal self-realization	enchantment – being as intrinsically meaningful, valuable and sacred; generalized hermeneutics and semiotics; enhanced human perception and	(awakening of) non-duality; being being (cosmic consciousness, at-homeness); human creative powers unbound (the unlimited self); open,

	the truth or ground of reality; the constellational identity or unity of non-duality and duality; generalized co-presence	of creative power of thought	being to include mental and emotional *sui generis* realities			hermeneutical powers, direct consciousness-to-consciousness causality	unending evolution
Modes or forms of transcendence (non-dual components of action)	*transcendental consciousness* (supramental; at or of the ground-state)	*transcendental identification* (feature of consciousness; becoming one in being)	*transcendental teamwork* or holism (feature of agency; becoming one in or in the context of one's agency)	*transcendental agency* (feature of agency; becoming one in or in the context of one's agency)	*transcendental retreat* into self-identity (feature of consciousness; becoming one in being)	*transcendental identification* and *agency*	*transcendental consciousness*
Direction of transcendence	ground of 1–4	1. outwards, onto (away from subjectivity into objectivity – loss of self)	4. with	3. on, at or in (absorption in activity)	2. inwards, into (away from objectivity into subjectivity – loss of the object)	1–4	ground of 1–4

(*Continued*)

Table 3—continued

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR > CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/ CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/ PMR*
Modes of transcendental consciousness	transcendental or supramental consciousness at or of the ground-state	mindlessness (form without content: absence of content; bliss-consciousness)		mindfulness (content without form: repletion of content) → spontaneous right-action → mindlessness			
Principles of spirituality	self-referentiality or hermeticism (primacy of)	simultaneity	complementarity	practical mysticism		radical hermeticism (primacy of self-referentiality entails the liberation and flourishing of all beings)	

Qualities of the ground-state	transcendental ground	transcendental emergence	transcendental identification or union	transcendental agency	transcendental reflection	transcendental perception	awakening of non-duality;
Human ground-state (*dharmic*) capacities	*will* unbound energy or potential; freedom (the capacity to do one thing rather than another)	*creativity* freedom as absenting constraints (negative completion)	*love*	*right-action*	*fulfilled intentionality* or self-realization or enlightenment (positive completion)	*enchantment*	*awakening* of non-duality; universal fulfilment or peace
Conditions for self-realization	being in your ground-state or *dharma* (absence of atomistic ego)	clear mind, single-pointedness; mindlessness or innocence	pure heart	balanced body	absence of belief in the brute physicality of the world	enchantment	awakening
Elements of the human creative process (action)	will (initial impulse or calling)	creation (emergence) thought/ unthought	formation, shaping; feeling or emotion	making (physical action and objectification)	fulfilled or realized intentionality (reflection of objectification to the maker)	enchanted resonance of fulfilled intentionality	awakening to the non-dual ground of fulfilled intentionality (self- and god-realization)

(*Continued*)

Table 3—continued

Stadion of the ontological–axiological chain/phase of PMR > CR	*1M Non-identity/ TR*	*2E Negativity/ CN*	*3L Totality/EC*	*4D Transformative agency/DCR*	*5A Spirituality/ TDCR*	*6R (Re-) enchantment/ PMR*	*7A/Z Non-duality/ PMR*
Dialectic of learning	enfolded or implicit knowledge	discovery and recall or anamnesis (emergence of enfolded knowledge)	shaping (binding knowledge back into our innermost being – self-formation – and elaborating it)	objectifying knowledge in practice	reflection or fulfilment		
Circles of human love	1. self	2. another human	3. all humans	4. all beings	5. the absolute		
Cosmogeny (cycle of creativity of being as such, eventually perhaps repeating)	polyvalent foundational impulse (unbound energy from implicit potential enfolded in absence)	creation (transcendental emergence)	formation, shaping	making (objectification)	fulfilled intentionality of the foundational impulse (reflection of objectification back to the creator)	enchanted resonance of fulfilled intentionality	universal awakening of non-duality (self- and god-realization); open, on-going

Cosmotheogeny (cycle of cosmic creation, eventually perhaps repeating*)	self-creation of the creator ex nihilo†	emergence of realm of duality, becoming and time	emergence of realm of demi-reality	individual self-realization (commencement of return cycle‡ from alienation)	individual and universal self-realization or eudaimonia (theosis or heaven on earth); the elimination of demi-reality	individual god-realization (oneness with totality)	universal god-realization; open, ongoing; the elimination of relative reality

† Corresponding to the descent of consciousness in traditional cosmotheogenesis, and to Big Bang in modern cosmological theory.

‡ Corresponding to the ascent of consciousness in traditional cosmotheogenesis.

* Corresponding to cycles from Big Bang to Big Crunch in modern cosmological theory.

Note. 7A/Z > 6R > 5A > 4D > 3L > 2E > 1M, so that 7A/Z constellationally contains all the rest.

Table 4 Key moments and figures of PMR mapped to the CR domains of reality

Domains of Reality	*Real*	*Actual*	*Empirical/Conceptual*
	experiences, concepts and signs *events* ***mechanisms***	*experiences, concepts and signs* ***events*** *[mechanisms]*	***experiences, concepts and signs*** *[events]* *[mechanisms]*
REALMS OF REALITY	ABSOLUTE REALITY the enfolded, the implicit (the implicate order); fields of implicitly conscious possibility	RELATIVE REALITY the unfolded, the explicit (the explicate order)	DEMI-REALITY the falsely unfolded
SOCIAL PRINCIPLE	**love** and **peace**	**struggle**	**war**, control
PHILOSOPHY	**metaReality**	**critical realism**	**irrealism**
ONTOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE	**truth**	**realism**	**irrealism**
META-PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE (1)	**non-duality** (identity, identification, unity) (a property of consciousness)	**duality** (non-identity, without alienation but with the potential for it)	**dualism** (alienation)
META-PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE (2)	**truth** (most basically the revelation of identity)	**non-identity**	**mis-identification, error, falsity**
ORIENTATION TO BEING	**being being**	**thinking being**	**evading being**

SUBJECTIVITY–OBJECTIVITY RELATION	**unity-in-diversity**	**expressive unity**	**disremption** (alienation)
DIMENSIONS OF THE SELF	**transcendental** or alethic **self** or ground-state (a field of possibility)	**embodied self**	**ego** (a real illusion)
FORMS OF ENCHANTMENT	**enchantment**	**re-enchantment**	**disenchantment** (emergent false level or ideology)
FORMS OF FREEDOM	**peace** (dialectically = universal fulfilment)	**freedom to** (lessening of positive incompleteness or the absence of total development)	**freedom from** (elimination of negative incompleteness or heteronomous determinations)
MODES OF FREEDOM AND UNFREEDOM (non-alienation and alienation)	**autonomy** (identity – true for, to and of itself)	**unity**	**alienation**
FORM OF IDEOLOGY (demi-reality)	**underlying generative falsity** (alethic falsity)	**practical**	**theoretical**
FORM OF ALIENATION (demi-reality)	**self-alienation**	**practical**	**conceptual**
LOGIC OF MASTER–SLAVERY (demi-reality)	**exploitation**	**conditionality** of transactions	**desire** (as dominant motivation)
PATHS TO UNION WITH TOTALITY (a tri-unity)	**truth** (*jnana* yoga)	**practice** (*karma* yoga)	**love** (*bhakti* yoga)
THE HOLY TRINITY OF CRITICAL REALISM	**ontological realism**	**epistemic relativity**	**judgemental rationality**

(*Continued*)

Table 4—continued

Domains of Reality	*Real*	*Actual*	*Empirical/Conceptual*
MODES IN WHICH ABSOLUTE REALITY SUSTAINS, IS CONNECTED WITH, AND IS ACCESSED IN, THE WORLD OF DUALITY			
FORMS OF UNITY OR IDENTITY (modes in which non-duality sustains duality)	**ground** or basis (ground-state, cosmic envelope)	**mode of constitution** (or reproduction/transformation) via transcendence	**fine structure** or deep interior† of all aspects of being
MECHANISMS OF IDENTIFICATION (modes of connection of non-duality)	**co-presence** (a property of all beings)	**reciprocity** (a property of animate beings)	**transcendental identification** (a property of consciousness)

DYNAMIC OR EVOLUTIONARY FORM OF MECHANISMS OF IDENTIFICATION (modes of connection of non-duality)	**attraction** (integrated rhythmics)	**synthesis** (of spatio-temporally spread phenomena)	**economy** (generalized synchronicity or unfolding, inwardizing englobement)
FORMS OF TRANSCENDENCE	**transcendental consciousness** at or of the ground-state	**transcendental agency** or transcendental identification in agency (solo or teamwork)	**transcendental identification** in consciousness

† Fine structure pertains to the empirical/conceptual domain because it is implicit (ground-state) consciousness and can be experienced as such. It pertains equally to the domain of the real.

Note. Correspondences are sometimes loose, particularly in the case of those between domains and realms of reality: each of the realms have real, actual and empirical/conceptual dimensions. The items in bold in the rows after the first can be arranged in a triplex structure in exactly the same way as in the first row (for further exemplification, see Bhaskar and Hartwig 2010, Table 17, p. 115). Lowermost (primary) levels can then be seen to constellationally embrace upper (secondary) levels, hence to have ontological, epistemological and logical priority over them – the priority of the enfolded over the unfolded, the possible over the actual. Where upper levels, which thus presuppose primary levels, embody categorial error and ignorance, they function to occlude lower levels. Square-bracketed levels are not given in the concept of levels without square brackets but are presupposed by it.

Preface

This book continues the argument commenced in *Reflections on Meta-Reality*[1] to the effect that the non-dual sustains the world of duality which almost all hitherto existing philosophies, including my previous philosophy of critical realism, described. Here I should perhaps say that I regard critical realism, in its fullest development, as the best description of the world of duality to date. But that world has a basis or ground, a mode of constitution and a fine structure which metaReality, together with its companions and sequels, sets out to describe.

It is an extraordinary feature that the world of non-duality could not for a moment survive without its non-dual ground, mode of constitution and fine structure (or interior). So let me just outline at the start the three ways in which non-duality sustains the realm of duality.

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[1] *Reflections on Meta-Reality: Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life*. Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London, 2002.

Three Modalities of Non-duality

First, as **ground-state** (and through the connectivity of ground-states in what I have called the **cosmic envelope)** it is the ultimate ingredient in all other states of being, activity and consciousness. These ground-state qualities of human beings include inter alia (but not only) our implicit potential (both in the sense of energy and in the sense of intelligence), creativity, love, capacity for right-action and for the fulfilment of our intentionality in the world.

The second sense in which the non-dual sustains or grounds the realm of duality is the sense in which certain features of transcendence are essential to the constitution and reproduction of everyday life. In *Reflections on Meta-Reality* I distinguish a relative from an absolute form of transcendence. The relative sense of transcendence is one in which one situation can surpass and resolve the problems in a pre-existing situation or set of situations (which may be theoretical problem-fields in science, socio-economic forms or relationships or whatever). Between the relative and the absolute sense we have the phenomenon of emergence out of the blue. In its absolute sense transcendence just is non-duality or unity in or with a total context.

The four principal forms of transcendence I distinguished there were the transcendence of a consciousness away from objectivity totally into its own subjectivity; its transcendence away from its subjectivity totally into some objectivity, which I called *transcendental identification in consciousness*; its total absorption in agency, which I called *transcendental agency*; and its total unity in action with other agents or a situation, which I called transcendental holism or teamwork.

Two other concepts of transcendence are very important to note. There is first the concept of the *transcendental* or real *self*, which is equivalent to the concept of a being's ground-state. Then there is the concept of *transcendental consciousness.* This has two inflections, the first being the consciousness of or at our ground-state; and the second being the consciousness we experience in transcendental identification or unity. We will come in a bit to see how these two inflections are related. There is one further feature

of transcendence, which I have called *transcendental ingredience*, which is worth emphasising here. Both in the constitution of everyday life and in the formation of some total situation or personality, the transcendental, non-dual or ground-state component or level may be only one factor, although the basic sustaining factor, in the whole complex—as such it is ingredient, as the ultimate sustaining state, in all other states which may be regarded as emergent from it.

The third mode or way in which non-duality features as a necessary condition or constituent in all human life is the sense in which it constitutes the fine structure or what we could call the deep interior of any moment or aspect of being or consciousness. For if one goes deeply enough into it, it will reveal the qualities of bliss, emptiness, suchness, rich identity, or pure unbounded energised love, etc., qualities which, in a way, are continuous with the ground-state qualities of creation, which thus seep through and infuse all the rest of being as, so to speak, its ontologically ultimate interior.

If the first mode can be established (positively) by transcendental argumentation and (negatively) by *reductio ad absurdum*; and the second mode can be established both by transcendental argument and retroductive or phenomenological analysis of the genesis or constitution of any situation or complex in life; the third mode can probably be established most easily only in a phenomenological or experiential way, as (most classically) in mystical experience, but transcendental and other philosophical grounds can also be adduced for it and the interconnection of all three modes.[2]

It may be helpful here if I just say something about how these concepts emerged out of the development of the transcendental dialectical critical realism which I essayed in *From East to West*. There the notion of an ultimatum and the idea of god as an ultimatum was introduced; and also there was talk of transcen-

[2] See the Preface in *From Science to Emancipation*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London, 2002.

dence as involving either an emergence out of nothing or a kind of engulfment by something awesomely different or special or of a very rarefied kind. And this is indeed how the realm of non-duality has normally been thought of, namely as a sort of thing which is to do with god and ultimata or bliss or peak experiences, such as one might have during a moment of scientific or artistic creativity or while listening to music or in prayer or worship, etc.

In the first context I have now developed the concepts of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope, which binds the ground-states of all beings together in the universe. This is clearly related in some way to the idea of an ultimatum: in fact the cosmic envelope is the ultimatum, and it is an ultimatum ingredient in all beings at the level of their ground-states. In this sense it is in fact continuous with that aspect of non-duality which I discussed in *From East to West*.

What therefore are we to say about the notions of transcendence and the transcendent which I thematised there? The first thing to note is that transcendence in metaReality is essentially identification or unification or unity in that total context, therefore it involves at the very least two terms. There is nothing mysterious about the two terms involved in a relationship of transcendental identification or unification. Thus when I talk to you and you understand me we are in transcendental identification in consciousness. Neither of us is mysterious, both of us are clearly definable and yet here is transcendental identification. So the first thing wrong with that understanding of transcendence was the idea that only one term was, so to speak, clearly defined. In fact once one situates the idea of transcendence as necessarily involving identification or unification in the context of a single cosmos then it is clear that the other term involved in the breakdown of subject–object duality will be ontologically immanent, in some way part of our world.

The second major difference is that transcendence and transcendental identification are no longer confined to the realm of what one might call bliss or peak experiences. Radier, in the development of my second mode of non-duality, transcendental

identification and transcendental agency are seen to be necessary features for all social interaction and indeed perception or understanding of the world and indeed, in the form of transcendental agency, for any human (and by extension it can be argued any non-human) act at all. In other words the zone of non-duality is continually accessed and experienced in everyday life. However the idea of transcendental identification, or transcendence more generally as something special, something which marks a break from the routines of everyday life and our ordinary understandings of the world is not entirely given up in metaReality.

For in the third modality of non-duality we understand the non-dual as the fine interior, the deep structure of all being or consciousness or life. Certainly this is not immediately obvious and we will go into this at some length later. Suffice it to say that if you attend long enough, focus single-mindedly on any aspect of being then you will experience a fine interior which has properties which the mystical literature have characterised in such ways as *sunyata* (emptiness) or *tathata* (suchness), the void or *atman*, that pure unbounded love which is the cohesive force of the universe, the Buddha-nature which is present in all beings or the experience of *sat-chit-anand*, the bliss-consciousness of being, which is the basis of everything and, arguably, the driving force of evolution.

This third aspect of non-duality connects up in a certain way with the first aspect and the kind of claim which could be made for it as this: If you go deeply enough into anything, whether it be a broom or the corner of a room, a sound or your breath you will eventually reach some ground-state, some aspect or part of the cosmic envelope from which it derives its energy and being, in the sense of being part of a single universe, one cosmos. Of course looked at in the ordinary way it will reveal many, many other aspects too, which overlay the experiential identification of this fine structure which requires an act of suspension of our normal procedures of thinking, feeling and so forth. In this way it involves an epoche in the durée in the flow of day-to-day experience.

Identity

In the philosophy of metaReality the concept of non-duality comes very much then to the fore, and unlike philosophies of non-identity, such as critical realism, it stresses concepts of identity, identification and unity (including unification) and those properties which are necessary to make identity and unity possible. For instance in the social world it has seemed pretty obvious to many thinkers from the ancient Greeks that the binding or unifying force in any society must be love—and arguably even in cosmology today one finds such a theme. But a moment's reflection shows it is pretty difficult to get a coherent account of knowledge, unless involving in some way the identity of knower, known, and even the process of knowing.[3] Moreover, identity can hold between any two terms, and indeed it is difficult to see how ultimately any two things in the world could be related in some way unless in some mode or point they are interconnected, and in that moment of interconnection, they are identified. In other words, interconnection always presupposes a moment of identity. This also allows us to note that non-identity always presupposes some prior or encompassing identity or identification, otherwise there would be no grounds for declaring the non-identical elements distinct. Thus concepts of identity, unity, etc. are ontologically, epistemologically and logically *prior* to concepts of non-identity, etc.

At the same time the way in which we understand these terms needs to be radically refined and indeed transformed. It is also very important to note that this philosophy of identity has nothing in common with philosophies of identity where identity is modelled on a punctiform, atomistic point, or on the other hand an abstract blanket whole. This is rich holistic, differentiated and developing identity. Thus in becoming one with a picture or a situation, the differentiation in that picture and situation (and also its development) is not lost in any way. Even to understand the meaning of a sentence is to become one with a rich complex differentiated whole. So as non-dual beings, either

[3] See page 2 of the Preface to *From Science to Emancipation*.

as an ideal, and/or in our essence, we would be open complex totalities showing high differentiation, recursively embedding our activities and new developments within an ever expanding field. The emphasis on identity of course means that the idea of existential intransitivity and referential detachment must ultimately go.

Whereas the philosophy of metaReality is primarily a philosophy of identity, identification and unification, critical realism, pivoting on the concept of non-identity, is essentially, like almost all existing philosophies, a philosophy of non-identity and therefore duality. This new philosophy, which I will often just refer to as metaReality, incorporates and sustains critical realism as the best account of the realm of duality; but it argues that that realm is underpinned by and exists only in virtue of a realm of non-duality, which has been barely or inadequately recognised by existing philosophy, reflecting existing social practice. In addition it shows how, once we accept the vast expansion in our ontology made possible by situating non-duality as essential to social life and indeed all being, then we have to expand and deepen our understanding of the realm of relative reality, which has to be seen as enchanted. These two new elements—of re-enchantment and non-duality—make possible and necessary an enormous deepening in our understanding of being.

The emancipatory or liberatory significance of situating ordinary life and the world of duality and dualism (in which we are caught up) in terms of a philosophy of non-duality lies in the fact that ultimately most of the categorial errors, those deep fundamental errors constitutive of our misunderstanding of being, which are at the same time constitutive of the superficial, oppressive and mystifying levels of social being which dominate and screen our life-world, is the fact that they turn on mis-identifications. Thus we mis-identify our selves as egos; we mis-identify consciousness with mind, etc. This parallels the critiques of the mis-identifications revealed by say the Buddha when he talked about our craving for transitory things as being the root cause of human unhappiness; or when Marx isolated the fundamental categorial errors of capitalism which sustains it all, its root consisted in the mis-identifications involved in the process of extraction of surplus value and through the exploitation of unpaid

labour, whereby the capitalist paid only for the reproduction of the worker's labour power, but actually bought the value of his labour. So mis-identification actually plays an honourable role in the history of emancipatory discourses.[4]

Many of the theses put forward in this book are negative theses, oriented against our mis-identifications. Thus our mis-identification of ourselves, our true ground-states, our transcendentally real selves located on the cosmic envelope with potentially cosmically infinite powers, inseparably connected with all other beings on the cosmos. That is who we really are and who we may come one day to be in a world in which ultimately all other beings would have to be equally realised and free, for any one realised being to achieve her full potential and freedom. Then again against the mis-identification of science and creativity with the characteristic ideologies of mind; and even more basically with mind itself (not just its characteristically analytical rather than dialectical, left-brain rather than right-brain oriented—descriptions), i.e. our sense that thinking produces truth, or that the products of thought, such as the technologies we produce and the systems of political, religious and social ideologies we create and the socio-economic forms through which we live are themselves inevitable and worthy of our being. Rather they are like curtains, and we need to draw back the curtains of our mind to lift the illusory web of time, to roll back the technologies and systems we have produced to unveil the creative, loving,

[4] In the case of the mis-identification of ourselves as egos, it is literally a mis-'I'dentification. Another way to put this general point is to say that the most fundamental mis-predications (mis/takes) are, in the social world, mis-identifications, mis-equations and even, as is suggested by Hegel's critique of the subject–predicate form (and in his account of his speculative proposition), mis-predications which themselves have to be understood in terms of those category mistakes which are mis-identifications. In fact it could be argued that if identity and unity are necessary conditions for any mis-identity, then truth, which is most basically the revelation of identity (in the identity consciousness of another being) must be presupposed in any error or falsity or ill. At a logical level, then identity and truth appear as the metaphysical *ground-states* of non-identity, including mis-identity, and falsity. And truth and falsity do provide the basic paradigms for the whole array of TINA formations that metaReality makes central to the analysis of oppression and the project of emancipation.

right-acting ground-state activity which sustains them but has nothing in common with them. So we mis-identify ourselves with our ego and our minds with the source of our creativity and we mis-identify our life situation for our being, clock time for the immediacy of now, spatial measures for the presence of here, and the wonders of consciousness for the reifications of language, most of which are fixated erstwhile flights of fantasy, of the creative imagination cloaking itself in metaphor.

Three Mechanisms of Non-duality

There are three basic mechanisms in virtue of which relationships of identity occur:

The first consists in relations of *transcendental identification*, such as when, hearing or reading my words you become one with them or when going to make a cup of coffee you are one with your activity (this I will normally distinguish from transcendental identification in consciousness by calling transcendental agency).

The second consists in the *reciprocity* involved in relationships between beings who come into causal or other connection with each other. At the moment of connection there is a level of reciprocity which is actually definitive or constitutive of there being that connection,[5] in the sense that in the point of connection diere must be something the beings share in common, even if they are not conscious of it. Thus if someone, say X, insults someone else, say Y, then if the insult connects, that is to say if Y experiences it as an insult, in that moment there is an implicit reciprocity in which in some aspect of their being Y will experience the insult as such and either clear and forgive it or carry it within him or her. Unfortunately for X, even if Y forgives him, the insult is something that he carries within him as a result of the intended connection made with Y, and so *karmically* has to be

[5] This thus presupposes a moment of identification, the basis of which lies in co-presence; that is, the capacity to be one with another lies in the fact that the being or qualities of the other are implicit or enfolded, and in this way already co-present in one.

cleared, and a minimum condition for which, if Y has forgiven him, is for him to forgive himself.

Be that as it may, this takes us to the third and deepest level of identity, *co-presence*, which is where some other thing is enfolded or implicit within a being. And the claim of the philosophy of metaReality is that all other beings are enfolded within myself, or at least the alethic truth of all other beings, and I accordingly am enfolded within all other beings too. So the distinctiveness of beings remains, you are different from me, you are spatio-temporally, karmically and constitutively different from me, but you are nevertheless enfolded within me. The fact that all beings are enfolded within me enables me in principle to discover the alethic truth of those beings, such as the molecular structure of a crystal or the nature of gravity or what it is like to be a dragon; and in a much more routine way it explains how easy it is to identify with you as a fellow human being. In between we have perhaps cases in which we find it possible but difficult to identify, say, with a rock or a stone, or a piece of art we do not fully understand, or with what someone who is speaking a strange language to us is saying. Co-presence is important not only because it is the ultimate ontological basis of our possibilities of transcendental identification and the laws of reciprocity, including karma, but also because it explains why, even apart from the objective constraint we have already identified, we subjectively feel and experience a commitment to the project of universal self-realisation, that is the fulfilment and flourishing of all beings in the universe. Because they are also a part of my positive incompleteness.

Ontology

Critical realism is well known for being the systematic attempt to think being progressively, in greater depth, along five successive dimensions:

Being as such
Being as processual
Being as a totality or a whole
Being as incorporating transformative agency and reflexivity (or the unity of theory and practice)
Being as incorporating a spiritual dimension or aspect.

These have been nicknamed in the critical realist literature as the MELDA schema, referring to my initial characterisation of the four and then five stadia of the systems of (transcendental) dialectical critical realism:

1M—of Ontology
2E—of Negativity
3L—of Totality
4D—of Transformative Agency and Reflexivity
5A—the spiritual aspect presupposed by emancipatory projects, whether secular or religious, and which deepened the other four stadia as well.

As already indicated in this book, and the philosophy of metaReality, I am developing two new strata or levels of our understanding of being, namely:

Being as enchanted; and
Being as non-dual.

The sixth level I will call the sixth realm of re-enchantment, or if you like of enchantment, newly theorised or re-thematised, the understanding of being or reality as re-enchanted. The seventh level I will call the seventh zone of our understanding of being, reflecting the fact that when people have transcendental experiences (in the third sense of non-duality which I refer to above) they have talked about being in the 'zone'; and also by the fact that Z is the last letter of the alphabet. Then the MELDA schema becomes MELDARZ. But I am also tempted to give another characterisation of the seventh level, as that of the awakening, so this would be the seventh awakening; and then MELDARZ would be MELDABA. Now in one sense all these letters are just mnemo-nic devices, so they hardly seem to matter; then again in another sense you could say that after Z what happens, you go back to A.

There are three considerations in favour of MELDARA: namely, that although these three modes of non-duality that I have highlighted and the various mechanisms which I will go into later with which they are associated (primarily transcendental identification, reciprocity and co-presence), can all be

understood as increasing dimensions in terms of which we must think being, ultimately particularly at the level of the seventh zone or awakening of non-duality, this is something that has to be experienced. And so actually to call it an awakening does indicate a certain difference, that at this level ultimately we are not just thinking being (indeed it could be said that in a certain sense we are not thinking at all), but rather **being being**, a being of being, or rather a **becoming of our being**, the becoming or realisation of ourselves, self-realisation. It is this which is necessary to unify theory and practice in practice and satisfy the criterion of reflexivity in philosophy. Then again it can be said that this seventh zone or awakening is really what is required to bring out or complete our understanding of the fifth aspect, which must lead to notions of enlightenment or self-realisation and emancipation, leading ultimately to universal self-realisation. And further that the ending, ARA, connotes something of the ARH!, which is perhaps the nearest way you can report a transcendental experience or moment of this third sort (which I have used to provide a popular mnemonic for 5A, which is here developed to 7A). It would be tedious to extend this discussion any further here save to say that sometimes I will refer to the seventh level as a zone and sometimes as an awakening.

Thus we have in addition to 1M–5A:

6R (sixth realm)—of re-enchantment; and
7Z (seventh zone); or
7A (seventh awakening)—of non-duality.

The really important thing to appreciate is that the non-duality of being is essential for the understanding of all the previous six levels of being, as their basis or ground (that is in terms of categories such as the ground-state and the cosmic envelope); in their mode of constitution (that is through categories such as transcendental identification in consciousness and transcendental agency) and in their fine structure or deep interior (that is in terms of such categories as bliss-consciousness of being). Furthermore the understanding of being as re-enchanted, contrary to the thrust and explicit claims of modernity (and especially of its philosophical ideological discourses), that is the understanding of being

at 6R, is essential for the understanding of the most basic human engagements in the world, in perception, in action and intra-action and communication with our fellow human beings. Now understanding reality in terms of 7A and 6R does mean that we have to re-theorise all the previous levels of ontology. As this is only the first volume of a systematic four-volume work, and as in a way all these seven levels will be thematised in one or more of the seven chapters of this book, I can be very brief about this here. One could say that if 6R designated not only the realm of the (as conventionally understood) para-normal or supernatural (itself a category mistake), it also designates the typical domain of religion, whereas 7Z/A designates that of spirituality. One of the claims of the philosophy of metaReality is that not only are the two not the same, but that one can be spiritual without a religious practice, just as one can observe religious rituals without being spiritual. It is important to see however that if you take the claims of 6R seriously, then, just as I argued the evolutionary process may be in principle vastly (even infinitely) extended, so the boundaries of levels of consciousness and super-consciousness (and also buried or hidden sub-consciousness) may be infinitely extendable too, as in the cosmology of the Upanishadic seven heavens, etc., etc.

I have already argued that the seventh zone or world of **non-duality** underpins the relative world of duality, as its basis or ground, mode of constitution and fine structure. Once a realm of duality is constituted then you have a possibility of that kind of **duality** which sharpens into dualism, schism and split, alienation and contradiction. There is no need for duality and relative reality to be oppositional in this way (that I have argued elsewhere); but nevertheless it is a fact that in our world as constituted the realm of relative reality is dominated by what I have called **demi-reality**, characterised precisely by dualism and split, contradiction and alienation, and at present reification and commodification. Dualisms inevitably proliferate and split even further. Nevertheless there are always also tendencies for these dualisms to coalesce around one or more central polarities of an opposition or split, polarities or binary structures, modalities at work such as the modalities of what I have called master–slave relationships,

or that split which is involved in the relationships between one ego, an individual subject and another (in the philosophical discourse of modernity), or between one individual and the object world (or humanity and nature); or other binary oppositions, such as between capitalists and workers, men and women, etc.

The world of demi-reality is a world of illusion, a world of falsities, which are nevertheless causally efficacious. The causal efficacy of these falsities presupposes a truth, at a deeper level of being or reality, which is screened, masked or denied, in some manner occluded by the level of demi-reality, which also dominates it. Thus characteristically the world of demi-reality, of dualism and split dominates the world of duality, of relative reality generally; or you could also say it is the dominant form, and also a mystifying form, in which relative reality is experienced, lived, reproduced and transformed. This demi-real form of relative reality in turn dominates and occludes its non-dual basis or ground, its non-dual mode of constitution, which depends everywhere on the spontaneous creative ingenuity, loving compassion and capacity for right-action of human agents, and its deep fine structure which reflects characteristics of the ground-state.

Insofar as the philosophy of metaReality is a philosophy of non-duality; of identity, identification, unity and unification, it is a philosophy of love and of peace. We have already seen the connections between love and unity, union, identification and unification. It could be said that if the theme and mode of combat of demi-reality is war, that of relative reality is struggle, whereas that of absolute reality is love and peace—thus struggle from the ground-state is marked by love and a double dialectic of disconnection or absorption, inner peace and outer peace (both to be discussed later). Philosophies of non-identity, including critical realism, are restricted to the understanding of duality, of relative reality, incapable of penetrating to the zone of non-duality in which all the structures of duality, including the dualistic structures of demi-reality, are suspended, and on which they are entirely and unilaterally dependent. Thus if irrealism reflects demi-reality, critical realism (as hitherto developed) reflects relative reality, and metaReality reflects non-duality. The fact that there are non-dual conditions for emancipatory projects at the level of relative reality

means that hitherto existing critical realism must always leave something, and its own conditions, out. On the other hand it is important to say, contrary to the claims of some spirituality, that the battle between emancipation and oppression, here understood as the battle between the realm of non-duality and the structures of demi-reality, is always fought on the ground of relative reality

Relative reality is the world of becoming, and as such encompasses change and process, evolution and development, structured by difference, constituting difference, grounded in non-identity, differences which can be attractive or repulsive. Within relative reality is of course the world of dualism, of demi-reality, characterised and indeed dominated by hate, split, fear, divisiveness and above all alienation which the dominant, irrealist philosophies merely reflect. Critical realism, insofar as it isolates the deeper structures of relative reality, can indeed be an emancipatory philosophy. It is truer to the world of relative reality than the philosophies of demi-reality, because it situates the deep structures of that world, and shows how it may be transformed. But such a description is still grounded in duality, and the liberatory potential it affords will always be circumscribed until its deep essential, alethic, non-dual grounds, mode of constitution and deep interior are fully displayed, cognised and lived self-consciously in the experience of agents who are intelligent, creative, loving, right-acting and capable of the fulfilment of their intentionality. And to describe this world in such a way that the agents not merely think being, but be being, at its deepest level, i.e. realise themselves, is the claim of the philosophy of metaReality. So we have irrealist philosophies, realism in its most developed form of critical realism; and metaReality—reflecting sequentially the world of dualism and demi-reality, the world of duality and relative reality, and the world of absolute and non-dual being.

Perhaps it is best not to call the philosophy of metaReality a realism, as realism connotes the idea of a split or opposition between a world and its description, that is insofar as the very concept of realism is itself dualistic. So I prefer to think of it as describing being but oriented to being which doesn't think being and which in fact engages as much a polemic against thought, and the ego, and the products of thought and the ego, as it does

against subject–object duality as such. So it is not really even a system of thought, but an intervention in the discursive process which is designed to enable agents to reflexively situate their own non-dual being in the context of their growth and development in the dual realm and their struggles in the dualistic realm which dominates and screens or occludes not only the relative world of duality but the absolute non-dual world on which it entirely reposes. So this could be said to be a philosophy of truth, rather than reality (insofar as reality is affected and so to speak contaminated by duality and thus—in our present epoch—dualism). Hence the 'meta': it is the ground and truth of reality.

Or even better we could say that just as metaphysics signifies the ground and truth and first reality (the ground level reality, so to speak) of physics or nature, metaReality signifies the ground, truth in the sense of alethia and first reality of being. We could also say that metaReality designates the constellational unity of non-duality and duality; and the constellational unity and struggle, in our present epoch, of non-duality and demi-reality for the realm of relative (dual) reality. Metaphorically speaking, in Blakeian terms, the struggle of the unity and struggle of heaven (non-duality) and hell (demi-reality)—hell which humankind has made—for earth. In any event it is equally oriented against any fixation on name or self-description so at the end it doesn't matter what name you give to this system.

We can sharpen the differences by looking at the principles of the philosophy of metaReality in relation to the dialectic of the postmodernist critique of modernism and the critical realist metacritique of both. The essence of the postmodernist critique of modernism was to stress, against the abstract universality of modernism, the idea of identity and in particular difference, but also including, of course, relativity and change. The basic thrust of the critical realist metacritique of both was to say in effect the postmodernists had thrown out the baby (the essential concept) of unity with the abstract analytical bathwater; and it placed to the fore concepts of dialectical universality and concrete singularity, which embodied an emphasis on the mediation, differentiation, geo-historical trajectorisation, the universality as so dialecticised of all singular entities. But what was lacking from this

account was any idea of the dialectical universality of particular beings sustained by genuine non-duality and relations of identity.

The differentiation of the philosophy of metaReality from critical realism and critical realism from postmodernism can also be shown by an analysis of the concept of the self. The critical realist can counterpose to the postmodernist rejection of the self, the idea of the ego as a causally efficacious illusion, sustained by the categorial structures currently in place dominating the world of duality. It can point, too, to the relative reality of physically embodied personalities in what I have called four-planar social being as real entities, though transient, contextually-dependent and perspectivally varying ones. The philosophy of metaReality sustains the distinction between the causally efficacious illusory ego, the relative reality of the materially embodied personality, and the absolute reality of the transcendentally real self or ground-state which underpins and sustains both. This ground-state is in its essence non-dual, though it may manifest in dual beings and in the form of dualistic as well as non-dualistic activity.

Now it is an extraordinary feature of states and phases of non-duality that they cannot be combined with thinking or judging, with being or feeling emotional, such as not just imbued with a desire or craving or an attachment or aversion, but even with feeling sad or tearful; or being conscious of your body or of your ego, that is your sense of separateness from other beings, or of the results or consequences of your activity, or of any condition, constraint, contract or instrumentality of that state or of any way in which it can be used to manipulate, exploit or relate either negatively or indeed positively to other beings. Of course, one can be in a non-dual state of consciousness attending to one's body, or in a non-dual flow of thought or speech, but then one is just attending to one's body, or thinking or speaking; so that in non-duality one's intentionality is not split and at the same time we are not caught up in the web which defines the central problem-field of practically all philosophy and practically all the thought of all the societies we know of in recorded geo-history, which is precisely defined by a subject, an ego set off against an object world and other egos, and relating to this object world (which is understood in terms of abstract analytical actualistic

universality and may include aspects or indeed a large part of himself) by relations of instrumental, contractual or conditional reasoning. In other words in the non-dual moment there is no conditionality, there is no constraint or contract—it just is; there is no feeling or thought of constraint, limitation or effort, or even boundedness.[6] It would be one of the claims of the philosophy of metaReality that insofar as our existing society was characterised by the dominance of such modes of being, that these modes of being—instrumental, conditional, contractual, manipulative, exploitative (involving what I have called master–slave relations, etc.) were actually all sustained by a non-dual basis or ground, mode of constitution and fine structure which our existing thought had somehow managed to occlude or screen.

Possibly the most striking claim that can be made for the content of the theory developed in the philosophy of metaReality is that whatever objective you set yourself in life, it can be shown that ultimately it will have to be one which is (that is to say it will set you on a dialectic of a process of transformation which ultimately leads to one which is) consistent with your ground-state; and in which there is nothing in your being, that is the structure of your embodied personality which is inconsistent with your ground-state; that is that whatever objective you set yourself in life will eventually lead you to a path to self-realisation. Now the truly extraordinary thing about this is that actually you will not be able to achieve the objective you will experience in a realised state of being free to fulfil your *dharma* or your most basic innermost intentionality, until all other beings too are realised. That is to say that you will be inevitably committed to the goal of universal self-realisation; and *that commitment* is implicit in whatever desire, objective or wish you set yourself now.

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[6] Of course, in prolonged, sustained non-dual activity a feeling of tiredness may seep in, and that is perfectly natural, just as the attention may wander and distractive thought may creep in. The point is then it is no longer a non-dual state—which is not to judge it.

Therefore:

1. Every non-dual moment is or involves a form of transcendence;
2. Enlightenment is continuous with transcendence; and
3. Both imply a commitment to universal self-realisation.

Having said this, it should come as no surprise that we would be able to show that the goal of self-realisation and universal self-realisation are implicit in the structures of emancipatory discourses and projects, that they are implicit in the logic of the emancipatory project itself. This too I will show.

Now we could look at the object of critique in the successive chapters of this book in two ways: firstly as pinpointing what we need to lose, to let go of, to roll back, to surrender in order to be free and realised and agents capable of freeing other beings (or helping to free them); or alternatively as pinpointing the categorial errors rooted not in the individual consciousness as such but in the collective veil or *maya*, of mind, clustered around individual *avidya* or practical ignorance, in which we all bathe and have our existence.

So let us look at each chapter in this way. Chapter 1 argues that consciousness is primary, or as primary as matter, and underpins all our states of activity; and that implicitly every being in the world is conscious. Moreover transcendence, as I have already just anticipated, is a necessary and ubiquitous feature of human agency and social life; and that the process of enlightenment is a natural extension of our non-duality and clarity that we momentarily but necessarily achieve every day in ordinary life to keep that process going. Then for realisation we have to shed our ego (Chapter 2), and clear our mind (Chapter 3), really empty it, in-building all the knowledge that we have so that, so to speak, empty-mind, the only position from which we can truly learn and a position which maximises our freedom to act in the most pliable and skilful way to any new situation which might arise in the open and developing world of relativity.

In Chapter 4 we see how we have to clear our emotions. But the negative emotions we have and the problems and issues,

relationships, career structures, homes, objects of attachment and aversion we identify with block our capacity to creatively express our own unique dharma way of being in the world, and sustain the social forms which appear as the outward form of those negative emotions, in both inner and outer form dominating us and those others who as individuals would dominate us too. We are all the victims of master–slave relations; and contrary to the position of most emancipatory philosophies there is no uniquely privileged agent of change, neither an individual agency such as a political or religious leader, nor some collective agency such as the working class or women or immigrants or lesbians or whatever. The minimum necessary unit for emancipation is the whole human race; and everyone, wherever they are, and whatever they are doing, can equally play a unique and indispensable and initiating role in the processes of personal and social transformation, which are so indissolubly linked that they reflect maybe two sides of a single coin. So we disinvest in our identifications with our egos, our minds, our attachments and aversions and the social forms which they produce and reproduce and together with the characteristic modes of relating to each other and to nature. Then of course all this has a biological basis in our specificity as human animals, in principle subject to even biological evolution. Therefore our health and physical environment needs to be cleared and balanced just as much as our self-identity, mind and emotional makeup. And in a social structure in which virtually no-one can even begin to access their dharma, what they are uniquely best at doing, we need to transform the social forms which structure the world in which we live, work and play and throw off the systems which are products of our mind which are wreaking havoc on our environment and undermining the physical basis of not just our species, but every species on our host planet, earth.

The architectonic of the book is designed to work through the way in which all the components of our being, as embodied personalities, rooted in our ground-state and acting socially in a social world, along the co-ordinates of what I have called four-planar social being, are sustained by and are sustained at a non-dual level of our being and activity; and how the dual and heteronomous aspects of all the levels of our being can be cleared, so that

we can become non-dual or realised beings in a world of duality and dualism.

If the first chapter, on consciousness, more specifically on transcendence, enlightenment and everyday life, is concerned with the three modes of non-duality which I have already specified, together with the three mechanisms, then you could say that its subject matter is 7A. The second chapter is concerned with the self and its transformation. And, rather in the way in which I heuristically did so in *Reflections on Meta-Reality*, I am going to deploy the analysis of the self as a way of re-thematising 1M of ontology. In Chapter 2 we shall see how the self is typically constituted by an illusory ego, a relative but variable embodied personality (itself tripartite in structure being constituted at the very least by mind, emotional makeup and physical embodiment) and a transcendentally real ground-state.

In Chapter 3 we move on to creativity, which is characteristically the emergence of something new, the emergence from the epistemically unmanifest or transcendent into the realm of experience. As I have already argued this epistemic transcendence does not mean that it is ontologically transcendent; it is quite consistent with, indeed metaReality entails, ontological immanence. Nevertheless the understanding of creativity opens the door to the understanding of the world of becoming, of time and change, of process; and incidentally also to the understanding of the nature of the mind, which links and almost incessantly jogs to and fro between past and future, and in this way is particularly associated with 2E and the world of time and becoming. So I will use Chapter 3 to re-thematise the categories of second edge of negativity in light of a reality which is re-enchanted and which is understood as having a non-dual ground.

Corresponding to the four moments (of will, mind, emotion and physical objectification) in the production of a physical effect in the world, we have characteristic moments or cycles in the creative process which may be called the initial impulse, or inspiration, sometimes metaphorically described as the lightening flash, calling, emanation. Then there is the phase of creativity itself, in which thought and ideas give flesh to the impulse or inspiration; then there is the moment in which the creative idea

takes shape at the level of holistic form, the phase of formation in which it is so to speak bound or cohered in an emotive or loving way into a totality, charged with emotion almost ready to be released into the world. These three phases in the creative process, corresponding to 1M of ontology or will or the impulse in the creative cycle; corresponding to 2E of negativity, or the mind at the phase of creation; and corresponding to 3L of totality and the emotions and the phase of formation, come together at the level of 4D, here described in Chapter 4, in physical action, which is the objectification of ideas in the world. The fifth phase in the creative cycle is the reflection of the intentionality embodied in the initial impulse but more specifically in the act objectified in the world. Successful action is action which fulfils the intentionality of the maker, self-realisation fulfils the dharma, the intentionality of the human agent. Universal self-realisation is a condition of that too. If there was a stage beyond that it would be god-realisation, which would fulfil the intentionality of the creator of human agent, by reflecting back, in principle in a fulfilled way divinity to the creator.

In Chapter 3 in exploring the properties of the cycle of creativity we shall look at a dialectic of learning which itself has four phases. In the first phase the person who is learning just learns it, just sees it, just gets the hang of it, this is the moment of discovery or if already socially discovered and 'taught' this is the moment in which the student 'gets it'. This 'I get it now', 'I see it' is not something that can be forced or imposed from without. It is true that in that moment there is a transcendental communion or identity between the teacher and pupil (and in principle the same tiling applies too when there is no teacher present), but this is not the important point. The important point in this first moment (which corresponds to 1M of ontology in the dialectic of learning) is the moment of Platonic anamnesis, in which the knowledge enfolded within the being is explicated in his consciousness, awakened, so to speak, by the pedagogical skill of the teacher or the ingenuity and endeavour of the student or both. The really important point is that for the student to see it, to get it, he must already know it. This is not the only time we shall draw attention to the primacy of the standpoint of subject-referentiality. Actually

it would probably be better to call the first moment just the moment in which it was already implicitly enfolded, then the second moment would be that in which the implicit or enfolded was made explicit or unfolded in consciousness, emerged into consciousness. In this moment, of explication or emergence, what is learnt has to be written down or held consciously in one's mind, because it is so easy for it to slip back into a dormant or enfolded state. The third moment in the dialectic of learning (corresponding to 3L of totality or formation) is that in which the student has to shape, play, toy with that new idea or skill until he becomes thoroughly familiar with all of its properties. At some point his knowledge of this idea or skill will become part of his being, so that he is no longer aware of the distinction between what he is doing and himself. At some point speaking French is no longer something you have to struggle to do, but is just part of your being and you are a French speaker. Then we move to the fourth phase of the dialectic of learning in which you freely objectify, use words in French or whatever the skill you have learned, objectifying in more or less socialised media, making things or material objects in the world. Such things will reflect or fail to reflect your intentionality.

Each of these moments have their respective ground-state qualities; thus we have freedom, implicit potential, unbounded energy and enfolded intelligence as properties corresponding to 1M of ontology as such; corresponding to the mind, we have the ground-state quality of creativity, corresponding to the emotions we have the ground-state quality of love, corresponding to action we have the ground-state quality of right-action and corresponding to the final stage, we have the fulfilment of the agent's intentionality. Each of these ground-state qualities moreover map onto a level of the constitution of everyday life, whether consistent with ground-states and whether non-dual or not. That is to say there must be a non-dual component ingredient in a structure in everyday life whether that structure is dual or not; just as in a complex formation there must be a ground-state quality ingredient in that formation whether that total formation is consistent with the ground-state or not; and just as any aspect of being or consciousness contains the qualities of *sat-chit-anand* or bliss-consciousness

of being, even though they may be heavily overlain and totally occluded by other aspects emergent from that level.

To go into these qualities, consciousness is the transcendental quality ingredient in the first moment or aspect of daily life; and transcendental consciousness is ingredient in, though rarely exhaustive of all consciousness. There would be no human activity without consciousness. One could also say that energy, potential, that is unbound energy, non-fixated energy, free energy, a state of negentropy, all these were conditions for any human act—so one could equally take freedom as the non-dual component of the constitution of everyday life here. Corresponding to the second moment or edge the spontaneity of creativity sustains, in the sense of being actually constitutive at each moment of daily life. Any human action, even the reproduction of something that was already there, makes a difference to what otherwise would have occurred and is a potential or actual expression of human creativity—here the ground-state quality is also a feature of the daily reproduction or transformation of everyday social life.

The third way in which the non-dual must be there for any social activity is through the phenomenon of transcendental identification in consciousness, which reflects in a weak and neutral form the ground-state quality of love. We could not perceive, we could not read, we could not follow an argument, we could not communicate to one another, we could not interact in any way with the world unless we were capable of transcendental identification in consciousness; unless we were in a non-dual state with what we perceived or heard or were following, whether this was the flight of a bird in the sky or the words of a newsreader on television. The final feature corresponding to 4D of transformative praxis is transcendental agency. We could not do anything at all unless in the totality of what we were doing there was an element of non-dual or transcendental ingredience in that totality; that is something we did spontaneously, basically, without thinking about doing it, something we just did. So freedom, ingenuity or skill, transcendental identification in consciousness and transcendental agency are basic non-dual constitutive features of social life, whether they are employed in a way which is consistent with the agent's ground-state or not. Of course all the qualities of

the agent are ultimately derivative from the ground-state, but many of these qualities can be employed in a way which is inconsistent with them. To give a concrete example one can non-dualistically engage in a practice in war, which is inconsistent with the ground-state quality of love, though sustained by it. (A practice say of an officer shooting one of his fleeing troops.)

In Chapter 4 we turn to the topic of the emotions. There are probably five theorems which are worth anticipating here:

1. Negative emotions, such as fear and pride, depend entirely on the absence or incompleteness (e.g. conditionality) of love;
2. Nevertheless such emotions exist only in virtue of, are sustained by and derive their energy from the ground-state quality of love;
3. Such emotions disappear when there is only love;
4. Negative emotions, the whole nexus from desire and greed through to jealousy, anger, fear, etc. are all systematically related to each other, to the social structure and to categorial errors (philosophical mistakes) which are constitutive of the reality of the dual realm and are ways of thinking, interpreting and living it; and finally
5. Emotions such as love are not themselves actions. Emotions are motives, feelings, the grounds for action, rather than action itself. They belong to the domain of the non-actual real. Two things of great importance follow from this: the first is that you cannot identify from an action alone, such as giving a present at a birthday, or even fighting someone, what the emotion behind the action is. And secondly when you perform an action out of love or for that matter out of any other emotion such as sadness, then in the performance of the action, you must perform it, so to speak, without 'wobbling'. So Arjuna, for instance, felt great love for his kin and sadness about the battle in which he was about to engage, and Krishna had to shake him out of such emotional states and get him just into a state removed from passion (as also of course removed from thought) in which he did what he could do best, namely shoot arrows and aim

> dispassionately at their heart. So to identify any of the stages in the morphogenesis of an action such as will, intentionality, thought or the creativity embedded in it, or emotion or the love which informs it with the ensuing action is not just to make a category mistake, it is to make a practical error.

In Chapter 5 we turn our attention to action. Being in or close to your ground-state means that you will be acting from a point of view of optimal efficacy, maximal coherence. But it does not mean that your action will necessarily be successful. That will depend on fluxes in the rest of the field of your action, including all the dualities, heteronomies, blocks, constraints (what could be called error, evil, sin) which constitute four-planar social being at the moment. So all that being close to your ground-state guarantees you is the best possible action, not necessarily successful action. Of course if you want to go for success alone, then you may achieve it by operating close to the surface of reality and doing something very small and insignificant, but we have already seen that such a strategy performed over the course of a phase of your life, or your life as a whole, is bound to be counterproductive. For the one thing you can never eliminate, the one thing which is constant is the intentionality of your ground-state; so that if you insist on setting yourself objectives contrary to your ground-state then you can surely say that they will never be realised. Any split or unfulfilled intentionality will inevitably constrain you in your future actions. The only thing that won't do so is clarity and dialectical consistency with your ground-state, which will immediately entail a commitment to social transformation oriented to the realisation, i.e. the clarity and consistency with their ground-states, of all other beings too.

Being a non-dual being does not mean that you won't be performing dual activity. On the contrary, under any circumstances you will be performing dualistic activity (of a non-oppositional sort) when you are identifying new features in your environment, acquiring new skills, making new friends, thinking about what has happened, using you intellectual and discursive powers in a reflective way. All these dualistic modes of activity associated with development and growth do not preclude you from being a

non-dual being if they can be recursively embedded into a holistic field which defines your being. But you will also be engaged in oppositional dualistic activity, in which life will not just be a challenge, but a war, in which you will have to struggle and fight against precisely the sources of heteronomy, be they embedded in other beings, or abstract entities and forces which manage to subsist by feeding off energy deriving directly or indirectly from the ground-states of beings. On the view of action put forward here the primary social act is the gift; that is to say, everything that happens in society, including the totality of contractual and conditional exchange, tit-for-tat relationships and their exaggerated exploitative master–slave form, are ultimately sustained by the free, spontaneous, unconditional acts of the non-dual realm which supports the totality of the conditional, instrumental and oppressive relations so characteristic of the world of duality.

The principle of the *primacy of self-referentiality* has already been noticed. At its most general the point is this: that we can only act in, through and from ourselves—we are our only point of agency. To invoke the concept of four-planar social being, if any act involves the four constituents of: [a] material transactions with nature; [b] social interactions with others; [c] social structure; and [d] the stratification of an embodied personality, it is only the embodied personality [d] who can act. However the important point to note is that acting only at [d], he will nevertheless inevitably affect all the other elements or planes of social being, namely [a]–[c] and indeed affect [d] himself. This is the important principle of the *simultaneity* of action in four-planar social being. Thus there is no way in acting that I cannot affect all the other planes of social life.[7] And there is no way in which I can affect the planes of social life but by acting at [d], by my acting.

[7] This, entailing the inevitability of social change, is really a consequence of the four-planar character of all action, just as the 'priority' of self-change, bringing out the principle of the primacy of self-referentiality, flows from the spontaneity of all action.

The principle of subject-referentiality has two other implications, which it is worth spelling out. The first is that whatever the circumstances, the only thing I can change is my response to them. The principle of rationality means therefore that I take maximal responsibility for my action and act so as to transcend the circumstances whatever they are, taking full responsibility for everything that is in my control, not blaming the circumstances but empowering myself by assuming responsibility for my action. In this way I can be a non-dual being faced with a challenging set of circumstances, which I can escape from and transcend, rather than by deferring or referring responsibility onto the circumstances, remaining a prisoner of them.

The second implication of this is that whatever I do I am going to be effective socially, and what I do, my action stems from and will be explained by what I am, that is my being. So if I work on my being, if I become a better person, then I am necessarily going to act better, have better effects on all the planes of social being. So the principle of self-referentiality is entirely consistent with what I have called *practical mysticism*,[8] that is being a non-dual being, or approximating it, or just engaging in acts as close to the ground-state as possible, or as focused or pure and clear as you can, is consistent with being a being engaged in this world, that is to say someone who recognises the responsibilities of material embodiment, practical ability and social transformation, committed to ultimately universal self-realisation through

[8] There are at least four important aspects which make the philosophy of metaReality a this-worldly one:

[a] Non-duality is a feature of everyday life;

[b] Enlightenment or self-realisation is impossible without engagement in everyday life;

[c] Enlightenment occurs not in the absolute, but at the level of relative reality—at the absolute level, the level of the ground-state, one is already enlightened. And emancipation, like enlightenment, is of the embodied personality (or at a remove, the psychic being);

[d] Since all action makes a difference, definitionally, to the state of affairs which would otherwise have prevailed, any self-change, or any action for the better, immediately alters and may causally effect, in an expanding, accordion-like way, the state of affairs in the world.

action. Self-transformation automatically entails becoming a better transformative agent in the world; and the principle of subjective referentiality goes hand in hand with the standpoint of practical mysticism. These are just the first of what I will go on in the course of the book to call syntheses of self-realisation.

Re-enchantment

In Chapter 6 we turn our attention to perception. To understand perception, as immediately non-dual identification of the world, as meaningful, valuable, etc. we need to critique the philosophy of modernity, which generated the thesis of dis-enchantment.

So what does *re-enchantment* mean? First, the collapse of subject–object duality entails immediately the collapse of the semiotic triangle, so that we have the immediate identity of being and meaning, reality becomes meaningful, we can learn from it, it says things to us; and following swiftly on from this we have the displacement of meaning, signification onto reality itself so that things in the world mean things and are constituted semiotically and interpreted hermeneutically in a multiplicity of ways. The world becomes a meaningful text. Secondly, re-enchantment implies the collapse of the fact-value distinction so that reality becomes immediately evaluative, good or bad, right or wrong. Values are not subjective classifications of the mind, they are constitutive of reality itself, which becomes valuable, to be nourished, honoured and realised; or false, consisting of blocks on the realisation of what is truly valuable in being.

Thirdly, the distinction between the sacred and the profane collapses—everything is sacred, nothing is profane. In fact once this distinction goes, we can read the spiritual into the structures of everyday life just as easily as we can into what happens in a temple or a monastery. And the standpoint of self-referentiality implies a thoroughgoing critique of heteronomy including the heteronomy imposed by leaders, people in institutions who manipulate power, be they religious, political, economic or whatever. Finally, the collapse of the subject–object distinction also entails the collapse of the subject–predicate distinction; so that we see reality as processual and totalising and embrace

development and change as constitutive of life. From the point of view of the project of self-realisation this implies that we (i.e. our ground-states) need to nurture the embodied personality, as a parent does to a child, and often we will need actually to build missing but negative emotions such as pride, and to boost fragile fractured egos, combining this with a strategy aimed at ultimately dismantling everything which prohibits the free flow of love, that is with transformative rather than sublative or supportive spirituality. The basic point here is that you can only love others as much as and insofar as you love yourself. Nevertheless when you have shed everything in your embodied personality which acts as a constraint on the free flow of the energy, creativity, love, etc. of the ground-state, then as an embodied personality you will expand and grow, you will be bigger, not smaller, etc.

The most important philosophical features which enable us to sustain a robust account of the re-enchanted realm, and generate in its wake a critique of materialism, can be most easily seen by looking at four aspects of consciousness in the form of mind (though the same analysis could be pursued in the case of the emotions):

1. Irreducibility
2. Causal efficacy, including (tautologically), creativity
3. Spontaneity
4. Directness or immediacy

Together these features facilitate a robust critique of materialism and dis-enchantment alike.

The most obvious feature of mind and its expression in language and artefacts is that we immediately read, interpret, directly without physical mediation. When you hear my words, you don't listen to my sounds then interpret them, you hear them immediately and any physical act you perform depends upon your understanding of them. (In the same way I do not have to understand a person crying for help in a foreign language if I see them collapsed on the ground; emotionally I immediately know, intuit what is happening.) So direct mind-to-mind or emotion-to-emotion action or causality means that we have to generalise the notion of four-planar social being in an n-dimensionally

generalised way, that is we have to understand sui generis emergent powers and properties of mind as being real and capable of direct effects on other minds, and similarly in the case of emotions. All of this should have been immediately obvious, because nothing in the human world exists without ideas and emotions—there would be no human agency without consciousness, mind and emotion—these properties of action are irreducible as well as emergent.

Thirdly, they all involve a basic spontaneous component so we immediately think at some point, we immediately feel at some point without prior thought or feeling. Finally, just the most superficial understanding of contemporary society and human history shows the quite phenomenal significance of creative (and destructively creative) power of mind, especially when charged with feeling. The technologies of the world we have produced, the ideologies we act on, these are all products of mind. Even the weather, our natural habitat has been severely affected by mind; as has the very functioning of our bodily metabolisms. To incorporate the transcendental or supramental, the intuitive, the mental, the emotional, vastly expands our ontology. None of these can be derived in any way from physical reality. What it would be true to say is that from the point of view of the scientific cosmologist, our species has evolved in the solar system which goes back to a moment or phase in which everything emerged from a few material atoms. But that is only to say consciousness, vitality, all the other atoms were implicit, enfolded in that origin. Nor is it to deny that in what Bohm has called the implicate order, nested in any one atom or cell, is a potential hierarchy, a whole stratification of what pre-Renaissance theories would have called something like the great chain of being.

6R and the Critique of Materialism

When you are looking at the television you are directly following it, it is mind to screen, you read it immediately. There is no duality, you on the one side, the TV set on the other. Rather, it is non-dual, direct, immediate reading. Similarly when you listen to me and when I speak from my heart and you hear from your heart

then it is ground-state consciousness-to-consciousness unmediated (and in this case even by mind, or feeling), unmediated by physical causation. We all blow that mind—and emotion is almost always informed by thought and mental mediations—has tremendous creative and creatively destructive power in our world. If you were a materialist you would have to say the vast technologies we have produced would have happened anyway without our intentional agency or without the specific ideas we had. The causal efficacy of ideas on the material world is an undeniable fact. So we already know that mind is an emergent power (synchronically of) and (diachronically from) matter (and this much critical realism already established). So if it is an emergent power from matter then is it so absurd to think it can directly affect other minds as well as material things? Clearly not. Unless we take into account direct mind-to-mind causality and connection, thought and emotionally charged thought take on a sui generis life of their own. And underlying them so too is consciousness (which I argue is enfolded in all beings). This is the first aspect of the 6R, that is the sixth realm, of re-enchantment, extension to ontology which I have referred to above.

Once we accept the seventh zone or awakening of ontology, that is the domain of non-duality, then we can see very easily its rationale. For the breakdown of the subject–object distinction entails the collapse of the semiotic triangle, that is the relationship between the signifier (or sign), signified (or meaning) and referent (or object in the world outside meaning to which it refers); for now the world becomes immediately meaningful. And just as you read this book and you listen to my words, you immediately read the world as if it were a text, as if it were talking to you. And of course so it does. The clouds tell you it is about to rain. An accident tells you that people are hurt. Horrific rises in temperatures tell you that we are in for an ecological catastrophe. You could say that we are reading the world indicatively, as containing inferences. And perhaps you think this is wrong. But the inferences are present tendentially in the world you are reading. Thus take the so-called inference of MAD—mutually assured destruction: more and more nuclear bombs are in the world, sooner or later some will explode or be let off. There is nothing in the

world that is not meaningful. And by the same token everything in the world has value, positive or negative, and that is precisely what informs our action. The conception of the world as being re-enchanted is so patently obvious that one wonders why the specification of a sixth round in the philosophy of metaReality is necessary. Speaking in a personal mode I had the same feeling when I began to study philosophy when I learned that any talk about being was taboo. That actually you couldn't say whether there was anything outside your words or thoughts (or when you thought about it a bit more closely, even yourself . . . and ultimately that position ends in a solipsistic nonsense or ineffability). Because you can never say anything outside the present moment of your thought. And if that moment has anything of a structure or a content then it must be differentiable: at least two things must exist and at least one of them must be outside and other than you.

By Chapter 7 we are in a position to articulate the conditions for self-realisation. At the first level, they consist in the absence of an ego, that is no sense of separateness from the rest of creation, i.e. other beings; coherence, clarity or purity of a mental, emotional and physical being, defined by consistency of mind, emotion and body with one's ground-state—and as there is no earthly reason to believe that all ground-states will be the same, even for members of the same species, and in fact every reason to believe that each one's ground-state or dharma will be unique to him or her (so that the principles of concrete singularity and dialectical universality apply here too), coherence cannot be given a content independently of knowledge of that ground-state.[9] One might put this very simply as saying a clear mind, a pure heart and a healthy, energised, balanced body, then this would be pretty unobjectionable; and everyone would know that what suits one mind or body might not necessarily suit another. There is a fifth condition here—the absence of what has been called the blind tenacity in belief of the exhaustive nature of physical being. And actually though there may be something about our world which makes us identify with our physical embodiment it should be clear

[9] Thus what is right or clear for you may not be for me or him, etc.

to us all (and it will be hopefully after the arguments to be deployed in this book) that we are far more than just our bodies and that even for one body to communicate with another requires direct understanding between minds and direct empathy between emotional makeup's or constitutions.

At this level we have now reached we will be consistent with our psychic being. I am presupposing that to be clear mentally and emotionally means that we have freed ourselves, or brought to consciousness and cleared our unconscious residues of the past deriving from our present incarnation. Insofar as mind and feeling are emergent from our physical body then a prima facie case can indeed be made out for pre-incarnations, though not necessarily in a physically embodied form. Be that as it may, what we need to do is clear from within our psychic constitution everything which would be called our karma, that is everything which is the product of our intentional action which clings or binds us or constrains us in some way. This clearing of karma is as simple in principle (and often as difficult in practice) as the clearing of one's unconscious residues. The basis of it lies simply in that when you have done something so as to split your intentionality away from the intentionality of your ground-state such as hurting another being, then in virtue of the deep principle of co-presence, that is the way in which other beings are enfolded within you (which I will come to in a moment), you will carry the hurt that you have done to them in you and that hurt will be a constraint on your action, a source of heteronomy and split. When you have cleared your psychic being (both of unconscious and karmic residues) then your embodied personality will be at one with your ground-state. And this defines what one would normally call a self-realised or enlightened human being.

It is important to distinguish here weak from strong senses of realisation, that is the absence of heteronomy from autonomy. In the strong sense, self-realisation means being in one's ground-state, as distinct from being merely consistent with one's ground-state. Thus one may be doing something which is not inconsistent with one's dharma, but this will not be the same as doing something which is in one's dharma. The significance of this is that there will be an in-principle number of different, potentially

incompatible ways of being consistent with one's ground-state. And if one is not in one's ground-state then one's intentionality may be split by the differences between different ways of being consistent with one's ground-state. So only if one's being and consciousness is firmly anchored in one's ground-state will one avoid the possibility of split intentionality, with all the consequences which follow from it. The process of shedding of elements inconsistent with one's ground-state must therefore be complemented by what I called in *From East to West* dialectics of inaction, which involve accessing, stabilising, witnessing and other procedures to be discussed in Chapter 1. There are two possible motivational sources for the commitment to universal self-realisation. One is the pragmatic consideration that only if everyone else is free, in the world in which one must act, and fulfil ones dharma, will one be able to realise one's intentionality. And therefore pragmatically one will act in a way which is oriented to the freedom and realisation of all beings, including a clearing of the residues or husks of their unfreedom. The second, purer and deeper motivation comes when one loses the sense of ego, and actually, through the phenomenon of awakened co-presence, experiences the unfreedom of other beings as one's own.

Ultimately a meta-theorem will establish that if there is a unilateral asymmetry between intentionalities, then consistency with, but not identity (i.e. the same as), ground-state intentionality means a split intentionality. So we would be forced back to the strong sense of self-realisation, that is stabilisation in one's ground-state, in which the intentionality of the ground-state is manifest and developed in different forms. Other intentionalities then will be organic manifestations of that of the ground-state, flowers on the branches of the tree, unified with the sap of the cosmic envelope.

Connected to the distinction between strong and weak senses of self-realisation is that between the sense of autonomy as being merely totally in one's ground-state (as distinct from the absence of heteronomy, that is inconsistencies with one's ground-state) and the stronger sense of autonomy in which one is free to realise one's ground-state dharma, which will depend on the freedom and self-realisation of all other beings and the spaces in which they exist.

The third level is just to see that such a being will be in his or her dharma, he or she cannot be truly free until all other beings are free too, and that means that their own negative incompleteness, their lack of self-realisation must have been eliminated; and that furthermore, so that all beings are self-realised too; and that furthermore on no plane of being are there constraints, forces, systems, entities which are sources of heteronomy remaining as a result of, or having been brought into place in virtue of the intentional acts of human agents—they are longer with us, that is, cleared. To give a concrete example, if a room was full of some polluted dust or soot, then this would surely be a constraint on the freedom of the beings in that room, even if they were all realised, that is to say the environment must be totally clear for the fulfilment of the freedom or the dharma of any one being. One consequence of this is that the position of the Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism is in fact not only a noble ideal, but actually the only position which is consistent with his own freedom, because he cannot be free so long as any other being is negatively incomplete, or so long as he exists and flourishes in an environment which constrains him.

Paradoxes

One of the features of a categorial or philosophical truth which has been obscured is that it will strike people as paradoxical, and this book is not without its paradoxes. Thus I argue that virtually no-one identifies with their true self, we mistake who we are; that the most important tiling intellectually and creatively for us to do is to operate with no-mind, and to learn how to 'unthink'. Collateral with the primacy of self-referentiality I talked about before are such paradoxes as 'no-one can ever teach anyone anything that they did not already know'. This indicates the more general thesis of the primacy of self-referentiality, which we shall see to be entirely consistent, through the principle of simultaneity, with practical mysticism or this-worldliness. More specifically it indicates the poverty of behaviourist, empiricist theories of learning and creativity, which always leave out an internal, agentive or autonomous condition for learning and creativity.

Turning to the domain of emotions I argue that ultimately the only thing we can ever love is god, and that is all we do love and should love, and that god is the totality of all beings enfolded within us or at least the condition of possibility of accessing it. And in the chapter on action I argue that there is nothing more important than to be defenceless, not to resist, to yield, to let go, to surrender, and this will strike people as an extraordinarily paradoxical thing, as paradoxical as saying you are never more abundant than when you are empty, or in the words of Eckhart, 'poor'. And then I argue in the chapter on perception that we are always in the picture we perceive and we must begin to perceive ourselves as such; that we can witness our awareness in a non-dual and holistically rich differentiated field of awareness.

So all these things will strike the reader as absurd but let him or her read on. To what should you surrender to act rightly? Precisely to the moment of action when everything can be concentrated on what you have to do, and should you encumber yourself with wishes and desires, fixations and resistances for the moment when you must act: pounce or duck. And what if you could invest your life in a friendship, or a dream house, or a fleet of cars. There is nothing wrong in having a fleet of cars, and everyone needs friends; it is the investment of your identity and energy and the constraint upon your capacity to act freely as a good fleet owner or friend that is in question. So when you go into it, to say to act well, first surrender (i.e. to the cosmos), is not so stupid[10] nor when the reader goes into the argument in Chapter 4 is it so stupid to say that if you love anything other than the divine ingredient which is the ground-state of the thing you love then your love, though it may well be rewarding, will not be as enjoyable and expansive, or whatever else you would want from it, as it otherwise would have been. Nor is it so stupid to tell people to shed everything in order to achieve whatever they want. Because if you have an objective in your mind and it is inconsistent with your ground-state, you will never be able to

[10] The fool, in any case, is the Shakespearean wise guy, and the idiot is the enlightened one.

realise that dream or objective. Ultimately you will be set upon a dialectic in which you are forced back to clarity in your psychic, mental, emotional and physical being and clarity and emptiness in those faculties of identification of mind, feeling and bodily energy. The idea behind emptiness is to put every being in a position of maximal negentropy, that is a state of unbound energy, because once you have fixated your energy on a particular desire, thought, ideology, name or judgement then it is tied up and draining that precious resource from your ground-state. For example if you can do something without thinking, then why think? Thought uses energy which could have been more enjoyably spent. But ponder on this also: that when you have a thought in your mind that immediately prevents something else, another idea, potential thought, from coming in that space which is being occupied and into which might come a jewel. Then again if you don't surrender in action, if you wobble with emotional turbulence, then you are not going to be able to express your love. Or if you try and see with your eyes, it won't work, you see, you feel with your whole body and whole body-field. You have eyes at the back of your head, you must have because you know when you are being stared at and you know when a car or a rock is about to hit you, you take evasive action before it has happened. These are extraordinary phenomena, but no more extraordinary than the fact that our philosophy cannot even make sense of the way in which you communicate with me or watch television.

Syntheses of Self-realisation

The paradoxes about which I have been talking are possibly extreme forms of syntheses that the philosophy of metaReality make possible. Thus most people assume that there is some kind of conflict between *self-change* and *social change*, an approach traditionally associated with spirituality, and an approach traditionally associated with political action. Nothing could be further from the truth. For there is no way to change society save through my actions in the here and now of my being, of course with others, and designed to have whatever kind of social effect I could muster. But the only point of agency is myself, just as the only time in

which I can act is now and the only place is here. But by the same token everything that I do will affect all planes of social being and potentially everything in the universe. Similarly everything I do now may have momentous consequences for the future, and what I do here may affect all beings everywhere. This is one of the syntheses of self-realisation, as I have called them, in the philosophy of metaReality.

Closely connected with this theme is the compatibility of the *primacy of self-referentiality* and *practical mysticism*. There are two other interesting features of this-worldly spirituality—first, immediately a principle of complementarity (to follow up the principle of simultaneity, that what I do now affects all planes of social being). The principle of complementarity is this. We assume when we look at an object that we don't affect the object. Perhaps we have heard tales of quantum physics that the way one phenomenon or bit of being acts profoundly affects the way another does; or we may even have heard that the observer affects what is observed. Now actually to deny this formulation is absurd in a social context anyway, for the observer is always a part of and must be included in the totality he describes. But from the point of view of our understanding simple perception it seems that the subject is on one side and object is on another. But you perceive my words, and they immediately affect you, by a little bit of extension you will find that when you focus on an object in your perceptual or feeling field you will have an effect on it; thus when you focus on your state of jealousy, observing it, it dissolves. When you observe someone or situation without judgement it begins to heal. And nor need we assume that this has to be done with our physical eyes. When you visualise a situation it heals (if you visualise it in a loving healing way or just without judgement). So when you perceive me or I perceive you we immediately affect each other, no-one likes being stared at, this should be so obvious, yet nevertheless it needs to be said. And then we think we are not in the picture we are perceiving, even though we know what we are perceiving is profoundly affected by us. Thus if I stare at you, you are going to feel embarrassed or annoyed or both. So even though we know that our perception affects what we perceive we imagine we stand outside what we perceive. But

can we perceive ourselves perceiving, yes. You perceive yourself waiting now for the next sentence or word. In any sustained holistic focus you are aware of exactly where you are.

Someone might say that all this talk of something underlying your normal everyday acts, your ground-state is something which is a figment of my imagination. But you actually catch it. Not just in perception or unthought, not just in moments of peak bliss-experience. You can catch it at telling you what to do: 'no, go the other way'. Sometimes we are so familiar with a buzz of voices telling us to do things in our head which becomes a veritable chatterbox, then we say which one then is our real self. Funnily enough there are a number of voices that are speaking, but there is only one listening, and that is you.

From Individual to Social to Universal Self-realisation

Understanding reality as re-enchanted and moving to a position beyond East and West enables us to capture some of the concepts, of synchronicity, of inwardised coherence revolving around co-presence, in terms of which we can begin to isolate different mechanisms for personal and social change. In *Reflections on Meta-Reality* I characterised one of these in terms of the concept of diving to the ground-state.

Here I want to distinguish, and connect (*a*) the dialectic of the dive of a being to its ground-state; from (*b*) the dialectic of the chase or the tracing of a heteronomous element back to its ground-state (e.g. through the power of unconditional love consequent upon observation without judgement)—these are linked by the theorem that you can only successfully chase in this way from your ground-state, to which you must therefore have dived.

(A) Dialectic of the Dive

Just becoming a little bit clearer, moving closer to your ground-state will immediately set up an echo in all beings who are dialectically like you in some sense. Other things being equal, your act will set up a reciprocal response within them which will tend to make them act in a dialectically similar way. But your act is not just an act of a particular type, say of loving kindness to a

creature in need, it is also a move closer to your ground-state and to the cosmic envelope, as such it will affect all beings, whether they share your characteristics or not. So other things being equal it will set up an echo within them (remembering you are present within them, and they within you), to move to their ground-states, to the realm of the transcendental, the non-dual, the realm of inspiration, creative ingenuity delicately intertwined with love, expressing itself in spontaneous but unimagined right-actions, in synchronicity with a multitude of other beings elsewhere. This is the mechanism of the universal silent revolution, a mechanism which is clear but whose form and effect cannot be predicted. However, given this mechanism, no-one should underestimate the effect of any act they perform. Historicism, in the sense of predicting the future, is totally flawed. All we can say is that if the species, and our planet in a recognisable form, is to survive, only through such mechanisms as this will it happen. In the silence and everywhere, simultaneously the dawn breaks—this is the periodicity of the sunrise.

(B) Dialectic of the Chase

Considering now the dialectic of the chase, the form in which the universal silent revolution depends on the power of love. Once you are at one with love, which, constituting the binding, is therefore the strongest force in the universe, eventually any resistance, any resistance to it must collapse. For the ground of the opposition's negativity or heteronomy (e.g. hatred, coercion, etc.) is love itself. This derives from the fact that any negative emotion actually subsists upon, and is unilaterally dependent on the ground-state quality of love. And when the ground-state which sustains the heteronomous element is reinforced with love, then the heteronomous element must be dissolved, transmuted (into love itself) or disconnected or altogether diffused. Metaphorically speaking the ground-state which has been drained turns on its oppressive parasite and throws it off or transmutes it into a form of manifestation of love.

So when you realise that you are in contact with the ground-state that sustains and is you, then you will want it to be with you in your daily activity, not something that you can reach in

moments of desperate need, as in prayer or meditation, but something which is with you all the time. And the extraordinary thing is this: it is, but you are not aware of it; and you can gradually become aware of it once you understand that you are in states consistent with, or analogous to it in your everyday life, and that when you try and focus on something you can find its deep self too. And you will know this deep self when you have accessed it because you experience that bliss-consciousness of being, that ineffable joy of being alive in literally everything which exists. And if you do not find that state of sheer bliss or emptiness or suchness, that Buddha-nature in some thing, then you drive that thing back to the ground-state that it is feeding off or draining, it is a parasite on the being of our cosmos. And of course our world is full of such things, they constitute the heteronomies, blocks, constraints on our well-being. And that kind of chasing is the kind of thing we have to do to eliminate evil and constraint.

We chase them back to the ground-state they are feeding off, liberating the ground-state or dissolving the parasite. So how do you do this? You bathe the object with the power of love that stems from your ground-state awareness. And in the light of the love of your ground-state awareness anything with any potential for light will be illuminated and the darkness will just fade away. So this is a graphic metaphorical re-description of another form of the same process of what I referred to in *Reflections on Meta-Reality* as the universal silent revolution. There I talked about universal synchronicity stemming from a single act, operating covertly through mechanisms of co-presence enfolded within all beings. That will take you to the point at which all beings are ready to act. The question would naturally arise as to how they should act. Do they fight and if so who do they fight, do they fight tanks, soldiers who occupy them, generals who command them, the political leaders who command or order them, and the bankers, businessmen or opinion-wielders to whom the politicians are beholding. Fighting in that sense is clearly absurd. You do not even know who, what, it to fight. Of course on a day-to-day basis if you come across a tangible source of evil and the most effective way to deal with it is fight it, then you fight it, throw it off, kill it if necessary. But we are talking here of a change of such

momentous magnitude that it makes no sense to personalise these systems, which in any case we all interiorise. The only ammunition which will be effective against those systems is the ammunition which we already possess and all we need to liberate us is the power that reposes, is stored and waiting to act from our ground-states. There is nothing stronger than that power. That power sustains all our social order and that power is continuous with the forces that bind the whole cosmos together. So you should not suppose that this is the case of the ground-state of humanity against the systems, including the systems we internalise. For we will strike a resonance in the ground-states of other beings, species, implicitly enfolded within us and aspects of reality of which potentially we have no knowledge. So moving to the ground-state and mobilising the power of ground-state awareness is what is required for individual self-realisation, moving towards universal self-realisation and throwing off the systems which are threatening the survival of our and other species. This is a single move and the mobilisation of the power of the position to which you have moved. And all this requires is to be aware of it and that you can access it and that you have sufficient encouragement to shed everything that prevents the force and energy of the ground-state being the sole driving energy in your life.

There are three grounds for optimism. First, every revolution has been unpredicted. Secondly, for the first time in recorded human history there has been only one system, one form of dual regime, one globalising world logic. There is no opposition to this at the level of the realm of duality. Third, the only opposition, the only difference is that on which the realm of duality totally depends, namely the realm of non-duality. So we do not have a choice of hells, nor are there in fact a choice of heavens on offer to us. The only alternative to the current order hurtling us all through global crisis, on all four planes of social being, into an early demise, is that heaven which is the non-dual realm which sustains it, and which in those three ways, as ground, as mode of constitution and reproduction, and as fine structure we all in our daily life experience. We do not have to construct an alternative order, the system which is despoiling us entirely depends on what we already have. All we have to do is recognise that we already

have and are this order, that the other order depends entirely on what we have and are; and that without us and the non-dual realm it could not survive for a moment. So all we have to do is recognise what keeps the whole show going. Once you understand that money is not a natural mechanism but something sustained by social interactions, or that politics or the law are kept going by the telephone and in the corridors, then you will realise how our immediate understanding, our natural creativity and love, the bliss we can find at any moment and anywhere, when we truly feel and understand this, that other order which at once dominates and occludes it will collapse without resistance, because any resistance that it would show must be shown through, in and by our non-dual understandings, actions and intuitions, and that would be a performative contradiction. Again it is just worth reiterating that this is not a prediction, nor even a form of encouragement, merely to state the obvious. If all that a philosopher can do is to state an obvious truth which has never been stated (at least in this way) before, and I can convince the reader to test for her/himself how in any repetitive or emotionally disturbing situation it is their creativity and love that keeps it going, how everything that happens in their social life happens in virtue of their skills and understandings, and how if they dwell for any moment on the constitution of any aspect of being—whether it be natural or artifactual—they will find understanding, love, emptiness, richness/suchness and bliss; then the rest is up to the workings of a universe and cosmic envelope connecting all our ground-states which no-one can attempt to second guess.

Thus what makes the scenario that I sketched above more plausible is that for the first time in history there is no struggle at the level of the demi-real, there is a single world system, a monological system, the point at which modernity has arrived is a single system which has thrown off its socialist cousin/alternative, dominated by the power of money and the media, and enforced by systems codified in contract and commodification, run by accountants and lawyers. For the first time the war between war and peace is clear cut. There is only one system dominating the world of duality, one demi-real system and only one alternative. That is not a choice between one type of war and another type of war

but a choice between war and peace, and the war between war and peace is a misnomer. For if my argument is correct, extraordinarily enough, it is not a war between war and peace, but the peaceful dissolution of war by peace; or one could say not a war but a peace between war and peace, which like the struggle between love and hate can only be won by love, and in this case, peace. What we are talking about is the dissolution of war by peace, the dissolution of hate and fear by love. There is a relationship of unilateral dependency and an inequality in the power and strength of the two sides that make the victory of peace inevitable. This is a much more optimistic prognosis than I would ever have thought to feel myself giving. But I leave you with it and I wish you well as you turn the pages of this book, in the hope that the resistances and surprises you find will equally surprise and delight you.

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Chapter One

The Vedanta of Consciousness: Transcendence, Enlightenment and Everyday Life

Section 1: Transcendence and Non-duality

I have already discussed the three modalities of non-duality, namely:

1. Non-duality as the basis or ground of the realm of duality, which is non-duality as the non-dual being of ground-state and cosmic envelope;

2. Non-duality as the way in which we communicate with other beings, especially human beings, but even more generally, perceive, see, read, follow, understand things in the world; and as a necessary component for any action at all, including speech, thought, etc.;

3. Non-duality as the deep interior or fine structure of any aspect of being, which through the power of perception, of awareness can be traced back to its ground-state, which provides, as we shall see, a powerful way of disconnecting elements and forms of heteronomy both inside and outside the field of an embodied personality.

Similarly I have briefly thematised the three main mechanisms of non-duality. These are, to recapitulate:

1. transcendental identification;
2. reciprocity; and
3. co-presence.

We now move on to the question of the meanings and forms of transcendence. First we need to distinguish a *relative* sense of transcendence, in which to transcend a position or a set of positions is to overcome the problems, dichotomies, etc. within them, by moving to a higher, fuller or deeper position, which, by completing or filling some absence in the existing problem-field or context, allows the successful resolution of its contradictions or problems, be they practical or theoretical.

This move to a more totalising theory-practice or social form involves, I have argued, a moment of transcendence, in a sense between the relative and the absolute (on to which I will come), what I will call an *intermediate* sense of transcendence, in which the new concept or idea or form of behaviour (way of seeing things, doing things, etc.) emerges in a way which could not have been predicted, deduced or induced from the pre-existing field. In this sense it is *de novo*, out of the blue, epistemically or socially transcendent, having the aspect of coming from nowhere. Even if it can be shown to have been something, ex post, exposed, which was natural and which only occurred because a given context was immanently well prepared, there will always be an element of novelty, of irreducible emergence out of irreducible absence, therefore an aspect in the '*de novo*' of the '*ex nihilo*'. In this sense, of transcendental emergence, the creativity or resolution is always the superimposition of an epistemically transcendent cause onto an immanently well-prepared ground. Of course this emergence out of the blue which, when it is fully developed, enables us to resolve the problem, is not necessarily ontologically transcendent. In fact the notion of the cosmic envelope, the notion of one universe (a uni-verse) implies that ultimately everything is immanent, bounded by the field of the cosmic envelope, the ultimatum. So the question arises: where does, or might, it come from?

The new philosophy of metaReality understands *knowledge* as, or essentially involving, *identification*. Therefore it is not such a simple question. Because insofar as an agent comes to make the

creative discovery, then we have to say that that knowledge was within him. This is the subjective or internal moment in any creative process, a moment of Platonic anamnesis, a moment which relies on the fact that the totality is enfolded, implicit within him, latent, waiting to be awakened.[1]

What then awakens it? The awakening is elicited, one must presume, by something external to him. Intermediate transcendence is the unity of Platonic anamnetic awakening and the alethic self-revelation of a being. We are not now concerned with the immanent ground. We are concerned with that external aspect of the transcendent cause which has to awaken or be united with the internal implicit cause enfolded within him. What I would suggest is that, in the creative moment the agent, who is going to undergo a Platonic anamnetic recall (that is, forget his anamnesia), is somehow united with what he comes to know. So Leonardo in painting and so predicting the nature and dynamics of flight achieved transcendental identity with the alethic truth of flying. Or Newton achieved transcendental identification with the alethic truth of gravity, previously unknown. A third condition immediately imposes itself. Are there any general features of this moment that we need to know? First in that moment of transcendental emergence, there is no mind, no thought, no particular feeling, no preoccupation, just the suspension of the relative concerns of the problem-field in question and very probably of everyday life as well. This is a moment of no mind, of unthink, of no feeling, of silence, stillness, absence of mental or emotional or even physical content, a moment of emptiness. In the space between thoughts, in the gap or clearing so created that union could occur, the new idea could articulate itself just because the normal thought processes were suspended. Had they been in play there would have been no room for anything new. This is something we will go

[1] Creativity, love, the self, action, perception, freedom, transcendence, all the central concepts related to the ground-state and non-duality generally all involve an internal as well as an external condition and component. On the philosophy of metaReality there is always both internality and externality, neither of which can be collapsed.

into in more detail in Chapter 3. But we already have almost all we need to say about the *absolute* sense of transcendence.

In this sense transcendence just is non-duality, that is, total unity or at oneness with one's whole context. It is often thought that this unity is characterised by an absence of differentiation but that is very far from the case as we shall see. So this then is the absolute sense on which I will be mainly concerned here.

We have already looked at the four main forms of transcendence in relation to the second modality of non-duality, that is the way in which non-dual identification and action is essential for any social life or human action. These are, to briefly recapitulate:

1. *Transcendence into*—that is the retreat of a being from objectivity, back into self-identity with his or its own subjectivity;
2. *Transcendence onto*—that is the advance of a subject's consciousness into total absorption into objectivity, something outside himself. This is transcendental identification in consciousness;
3. *Transcendence at, in or on*—total focus or attention on an act, or an act which is spontaneously performed. This is transcendental or non-dual agency (or ergonic transcendence). Note it has the two forms of complete mindfulness or attention and complete spontaneity or mindlessness. In fact these are the only two forms of activity in which ideally one should ever be engaged. Mindfulness or, probably better, the complete saturation of one's consciousness in one's activity, total absorption can be practiced through activities like mindful walking, that is being totally aware of what one is doing in one's walking and not allowing oneself to be distracted in any way. It is easy enough however to see that ultimately one could not do anything unless one did it mindlessly, that is without thought, spontaneously. If one always had to think about tying one's shoelaces, then one would never get around to tying them. Of course, such spontaneous acts are learnt, they are skills acquired, but once learnt, they are in-built into one's being and one just does them.

4. *Transcendence with*—this is transcendental unity in activity, involving teamwork or holistic transcendence. This is exemplified by teamwork in sport, cooking a meal or turn-taking in conversation. But in fact it is just as essential to the constitution of everyday life as the other forms of this second modality. For one could not appreciate a concert unless the musicians were in some way playing as a unity, albeit a differentiated one (a unity-in-diversity); nor could one possibly steer one's way around the pavements of a busy London street unless some kind of almost miraculous holistic, synchronicitous performance was taking place. Otherwise one would be bumping into people all the time. One could easily show this by simulating on a computer the chances of crashes or accidents, which are in actual life extremely rare.

In what sense is the first form of transcendence, that is the retreat of subjectivity into itself, essential? Note this does not mean that the subject has gone back to its ground-state. For we have already seen that one can have non-duality here even though it is inconsistent with the ground-states of the beings involved. Thus shooting a pistol or robbing a bank can be performed in a non-dualistic way even though (one presumes) they are not in line with the dharma or ground-state qualities of the agents concerned. Similarly all kinds of negative emotions, all sorts of stupidity etc. can be manifested non-dualistically. So the retreat into subjectivity is merely something like the suspension of the activity in which one is engaged. This is not necessarily then transcendental consciousness. But these pauses, gaps, hiatuses are essential for the normal functioning of everyday life. They provide as it were a clearing or a gap or a space into which something new or from which something deep can emerge. They provide the space for creativity, the manifestation of love in one form or another and a momentary relief from tiredness, pain or whatever.

Let me call these four modalities:

(1) **transcendental retreat** or **clearing**;
(2) **transcendental identification** in consciousness (which includes perception, watching TV, understanding a sentence, reading something, following an argument, etc.);

(3) **Transcendental agency** (either of a mindful or spontaneous sort); and
(4) **Transcendental teamwork** or holistic synchronicity.

Now turning to the first modality of non-duality. The ground-state itself is of course a being's transcendentally real self. Thus we have the concept of **the transcendental self**. Then, to simplify things, let us take the case of the human being's transcendentally real self—at the level of the ground-state or cosmic envelope we have the consciousness of the transcendentally real self. This is a supramental level of consciousness, which we may call **transcendental consciousness**. This is consciousness at or of the ground-state. This is the consciousness which monitors conscious activity and is in principle distinct from the consciousness of the embodied personality,[2] and witnesses or watches or is aware of the total holistic field of the agent's activity. So here we have the concept of **transcendental awareness**, including **transcendental witnessing**. Now I have already argued that the ground-state, its energy, activity and qualities are essential constituents of any human being or social activity at all. So the ground-state is immanent or ingredient in everything that occurs. So we have the important concept of **transcendental ingredience**. Everything which is inconsistent with the transcendental level ingredient in some being, form or activity constitutes then a TINA formation, involving the co-presence of heteronomous and autonomous levels. This concept of transcendental ingredience can also be applied to the second and third modalities, that is non-duality as a mode of constitution of life and as a deep interior. Thus in talking to someone in the car I may be engaged in transcendental agency while driving but dualistic thought and speech whilst speak-

[2] Self-consciousness, properly understood, is consciousness by the embodied personality of the consciousness of the transcendentally real self witnessing it; but it also connotes, with the loss of a sense of ego consequent upon self-realisation, the increasing reflexivity made possible by an expanded embodied personality, an expanded sense of self in the relative field of existence; and the totality which is awakened with it, a totality which is potentially infinite for any one being at any one moment of time, and potentially infinite for that being, in any respect, over time.

ing and so my total activity will contain an element over and above the non-dual component within it. Non-duality, in the sense of basic perception, direct reading or understanding of reality, immediate identification or following of meaning, spontaneous agency, is a necessary feature of all human action, including non-dual action. Therefore in any act there will also always be a level of transcendental ingredience in this sense. Similarly the bliss or ground-state aspect of a moment may be largely or totally obscured by that which it sustains.

Going back to the first modality we have characteristic qualities of the ground-state. In fact in the case of human beings, at the most basic level (corresponding to 1M of ontology) we have the properties of pure energy, negentropically free or unbound, that is not fixated or stuck on anything and ready to be engaged in the world; dharmic intentionality, that is pure intentionality or will; and pure intelligence. From another aspect, at 1M, we could talk about **transcendental ground**. More generally corresponding to every level of being, and every component in the morphogenesis of action there will always be a condition of possibility and therefore a transcendental ground. At the level of 2E, we have **transcendental emergence**, characteristically creativity but also expressed in other novel forms. As the ground-state quality characteristic of 3L of totality and corresponding to the emotions is of course love. Love in fact may be thought of as being a basic or defining characteristic of transcendental identification or union as such, a binding characteristic at the level of the cosmic envelope, and a cohering or binding force in social life. More generally the figure of **transcendental identification** is the immediate form in which two terms spatio-temporally, conceptually or qualitatively distinct come together. And transcendental identification we have already seen must be essential to all human being. The ground-state quality most characteristic of the 4D domain of transformative agency is the capacity for right-action and, at 5A, the fulfilment of one's intentionality. Corresponding to these one could talk about **transcendental agency** and **transcendental reflection** or fulfilment.

6R extends the scope of action, and makes it not necessarily dependent (at least immediately) upon a 4D form of physical

objectifcation, because we have the possibility of, for example, direct mind-to-mind action and causality. 7A, for its part, defines it in the ways we have just specified, but these do not add an extra element in the morphogenesis of action. In 6R itself we have the forms of **transcendental perception**, apperception, intuition and insight; whereas 7Z/A defines of course precisely the level, zone or awakening, the presence of which defines non-duality of the relevant kind.

Underpinning all these in the case of the human world is what we might call **transcendental freedom**, that is the capacity to do one thing rather than another. One always has in one's activity **transcendental access**, that is any form of being or activity depends on access to transcendental ground-states, even when they split the energy of that ground-state from the being whose ground-state it is or in some other way they fork or deviate the energy from its normal position within the cosmic envelope. This is typically the way heteronomous elements, particularly when they become reified as entities or systems (e.g. as oppression; or of thought, e.g. as ideologies) subsist.

Now we move on to consider the appropriate concepts for understanding the third modality, namely the deep interior or fine structure of being. Actually it is not so difficult to proceed from the second to the third. For when you are listening to me, you are not thinking, or feeling; you are just listening. When you are concentrated on your action, you are not emotionally disturbed or charged, you are just acting. Let us take the case of perception. When you are watching television and following it you are just watching, you are not thinking, you have no ego, you are not feeling anything in particular, either in your body or emotionally (and emotions are always a kind of mediator between mind and body); more importantly you are there, that is watching television, or you could say the television is here in your consciousness; and you are now, that is to say, you are only at the present moment. You are not concerned with anything else, you are in a vacuum, you are in a space, you are in silence, still. These are all the qualities of the fine structure of non-duality which underpins everything that we do.

So let us just go through this in one particular case. You are listening to me. You are at one with my words. There is no sense of separation between us, no ego, no duality. Because you are listening to my words, you are in my words and my words are in you; you are in the same time as my words, which is now, and this now is the only moment in which anything ever occurs. You are in the same place as my words, which is here, and here is the only place that anything ever happens. You are not thinking, you have unthought, you have suspended your mind, you are in no-mind. You are not emotionally disturbed, you are not suffering what we would call a negative emotion, such as jealousy or fear. You are not aware of any pain or hurt in your body. You are not dinging tenaciously to a blind belief in the physical. In fact the physical does not come into it whether you are hearing my words. You are directly hearing them, unmediated by anything physical. I am talking to you as consciousness to consciousness; we should not say mind to mind because mind is a certain freezing or fixating of consciousness in an egoistic and dualistic way. In the purest form of listening, ground-state is speaking to ground-state.

If you like, we need not go to the level of the ground-state, you could just say that consciousness, at whatever level, is spontaneously speaking to another consciousness and they are at one. Here immediately we have characteristics of what I will call the opening, the gap, the clearing, through which everything creative, everything loving, everything spontaneous and unconditional and effortless and joyous naturally occurs. Notice that in this non-dualistic moment, which defines the fine structure of our everyday dealings, as well as the deep interior of anything you perceive, there is no judgement, no interference, no dissonance—we could say that you have a spontaneous right perception.

Notice also that you are not clinging to my words. As soon as you hear them you understand them, then you let go; every word is a new one and the old one dies though you remember it or have internalised its meaning or import, which allows you to follow a sequence of words as a sentence. So you are not holding onto anything, you are not karmically binding yourself to anything. You are not, so to speak, fixated or stuck on a particular

word. You are also innocent of anything extraneous to that moment of perception, in which your in-tuition (inner teacher) is at one with me. And in that moment in which you follow or 'see', your in-sight is at one with me. Of course these conditions may fail, but then you are not listening. You are thinking or dwelling on something other than what you would hear, here and now. What happens in the non-dual moment is that you are immediately present. So in the non-dual moment you are there and there is you, that is your transcendentally real self, not your ego or some aspect of your embodied personality, but its ground.

If you go into anything with the power of perception non-dualistically attending (and of course it is easier to do this in social interaction or when you are following something you like, like a game of football if you are a fan or your favourite television programme or a good book or whatever), you will eventually experience its ground-state. If you go into it without judgement, without imposing anything then you will find its 'Buddha-nature' and you will discover its ground-state to be characterised by properties similar to any ground-state, but at the end, probably the simplest definition would be that you would have a feeling of lightness, of energisation, of *sat-chit-anand*, of the bliss-consciousness of its being. Similarly, suspending from thought or discourse or normal activity, if you go into yourself very deeply you will just eventually experience the bliss-consciousness of your being. You do not have to meditate or pray or listen to the most beautiful music in the world for this to happen. It will automatically happen unless you stop it. Therefore to get to this **transcendental experience** what you have to do is let go, offer no resistance, and you will automatically sink to your ground-state. You can feel your metabolic rate slowing down to the heart beat of the universe, of diachronic eternity, everlastingness. Of course this can be very threatening for your ego, your normal patterns of thought, the emotions or addictions or pain in which you have identified or invested your identity, so dissipating the energy of your ground-state or transcendentally real self. And it may be very threatening for other people, not to mention reified social entities, forms and systems, which have an investment in you as being a particular fixated, stuck, heteronomously compromised

formation. But it is not difficult, by letting go, dropping resistance, being defenceless, to go into yourself; or alternatively into something else, in your consciousness of course.

And in fact in any transcendental identification in consciousness, to the extent that it's pure, we do have again the moment of transcendental consciousness. The most extreme case of this suspension of everything heteronomous, everything which is not your ground-state, could be characterised as **transcendental surrender**, that is letting go of everything that stops you being just you and completely you. In a moment of non-duality we have **transcendental presence**. That is you are completely present *in* that moment and/or something is completely present *to* you.

When you focus on something, when you observe something without judgement and you suspend all thought but just perceive, be aware of, it, then eventually you will trace or chase that thing back to its ground-state and find its ground-state to be characterised by such qualities as joy or bliss. Suppose you have an element of heteronomy in your own field, something that you do not like or care for. Or suppose you are engaged with someone you hate or object to. In either case, whether it is inside you or outside you, if you go into it then you will trace it back to a point or an aspect of it which you can love, which you can be with. If the hate is within you, then obviously you must accept that, accept that you hate it. Do not deny it, just attend to it and when you attend to it fully, you will not be hating it anymore, you will be attending to what you hated, but not hating it. Now you can trace something back in this way until you understand its aeteology. Then, if it is truly 'hateful' and if you hate it, then definitely there is something hateful in that total situation, you will be eventually able to understand it, so after acceptance of what is negative, denying your denial, then will come understanding and comprehension of what it is. The next step will be love.

Now the importance of love is immense. Because if you love something, then the thing has a very difficult choice: either it must love you back or at least tolerate your love or it must flee from it, and so, because you in your ground-state, ultimately constituted by love, and since every other ground-state is also constituted by love, when you expose a tiling to the quality of the cos-

mic envelope and if you expose it sufficiently then one of two things will happen: either you will disconnect or dissolve it, deny it the energy it needs to subsist; or the thing will be reabsorbed into the ground-state it was parasitic on or be absorbed into your ground-state and so be (re-)united with the cosmic envelope, becoming one with, and so, love itself. In this way we can trace heteronomies outside us (as well as inside us) back to the ground-states which sustain them. And when we use the weapon of our ground-state, which is the weapon of the force that binds all ground-states together, namely the cosmic force of love, then ultimately heteronomies and ills must be dissolved or reabsorbed (purified by the cosmic force off which they feed).

Of course I am not arguing here that if someone is about to hit or kill someone else, you do not prevent them. No, you step in, out of love, and stop them, prevent them, even if necessary kill them (something which, paradoxically, can be done out of love, with the paradox removed when, as we shall see in Chapter 4, we understand that love does not qualify an action, but is a ground or e-motive for it). When you go into anything through this route of attention without judgement, ultimately understanding or tracing it back to its ground-state or the ground-state it is feeding off, which is understanding it, then, through its dissolution or reabsorption, you will eventually end up with the love of a ground-state; and then when there is nothing left but, or contrary to, love, you will experience bliss, the joy or bliss-consciousness of being to which I have already referred.

The bottom line of this is that if you observe any element in being, you will be able eventually, using the power of observation without judgement, to trace it back to the ground-state on which it depends, disconnecting it and/or dissolving it or reabsorbing it by the power of your love or the power of the ground-state, now strengthened by your love, on which it had depended. This is a very powerful paradigm for combating evil or heteronomy in yourself or other beings or entities or forces which are, so to speak, inhabiting or using or manipulating beings, so draining (through their embodied existence) energy from ground-states and the cosmic envelope, enabling them, so to speak, to carry on an illicit reified life of their own.

Anything which is reified, fixated, has exactly this form which dominates our lives. If you trace any commodity back to its ground-state you will find something natural, pure and pretty unique. When it comes on to the market then it takes the reified form of having a certain exchange value and it loses the qualities that it possessed before its commodification as a use value pertaining to some specific ground-state. Such are reified forms, and underpinning them are categorial mistakes indeed intricated into the social order. Thus if you can talk to someone about their jealousy, you may be able to trace together the genesis of their jealousy in their failure to respect and to be respected as a concretely singular individual, with a unique ensemble of qualities. That is an example of how a philosophical category mistake can be at the bottom of someone's negative emotions. But of course the emotion or trait or jealousy is something which is systematically inculcated by capitalism and many other social forms which now we must say inhabit us, just as much as we inhabit them.

Another way of deriving the same result would be by following through the logic of co-presence. What you could say is that you were tracing an element of heteronomy until you discovered and evoked the ground-state quality within it or the ground-state it was draining within you, that aspect of the cosmic envelope co-present within you, which the heteronomous element or entity or force or system was draining, once again disconnecting or clearing it from you or dissolving it by purification or reabsorption.

These two routes which we have identified could be called (a) the route of dissolution of heteronomies, evils, ills or the forces which use or instantiate them by **absorption**; and (b) the route of dissolution by **disconnection**.

In fact all the (ten) features of spontaneous right-action, which I will discuss in Chapter 5, are characteristic of the non-dual moment[3] as well; and also characteristic of the dominant (possibly under circumstances of punctuated equilibrium) fea-

[3] For example the integrated nature of spontaneous right-action as a manifestation of the tri-unity of mind, emotion and physical body (under the in-spiration of spirit or ground-state) is reflected in the necessity for non-dual activity to be co-ordinated.

tures of a realised person's life activity, and of his or her being. In this way you could say that, in the non-dual moment, we all have, as it were, a taste of enlightenment, though for the most part we do not realise it or enjoy it. Of course it is also the case that the non-dual moment varies not only in duration or extent, but in depth, intensity and spread or totality (that is what it encompasses). And that these same formal characteristics can characterise very shallow experience. That may be true, but there will be properties intrinsic to shallow experience which will tendentially set up a drive to deepening it. What is characteristic of non-dual agency or identification is that it is always in some way the expression of inbuilt knowledge (as we shall see in Chapter 3); inbuilt virtues (as we shall see in Chapter 4 when discussing love and emotions); and/or inbuilt skills (as we shall see in Chapter 5); and based on, and informed by, spontaneous right perception, cognition, reading or in-sight, including in-tuiting the world; as we shall see in Chapter 6 when discussing perception. We thus in-build knowledge, virtues and skills, including capacities for insight and intuition.

It is in a way an amazing commentary on ordinary life, as well as existing philosophies which mis-comprehend it, that in order to do or understand anything at all, we must suspend thought, emotional turbulence, distraction from the here and now, our naive belief in the exhaustive physicality of being, our sense of ego, our instrumental and manipulative ways of dealing with the world and other people, that is conditionality, in an attached or averse mode; so approximating the conditions of enlightenment, with its own conatus to universal emancipation or self-realisation, including the clearing of the residues that fill the spaces in which a eudaimonistic existence must occur.

Section 2: Consciousness as a Holistic Field

Under the dominance of the logic of binary oppositions characteristic of the dualistic or demi-real form of the world of duality, we tend to have a model of the subject as a perceiver set off against the object of his perception and not part of the field that he is perceiving. But in the non-dual moment the observer can and

should witness, as part of a holistic field, his own perception of what it is that he is attending to, that is he should witness his attention, as he is attending. In principle we can achieve transcendental identity or unification holistically with anything. Thus transcendental unity with a painting, or with an emerging or developing situation (of which we may, and in a way must, be a part), is already unity with a rich differentiated field. In one's ground-state, the consciousness which is witnessing will be the transcendental consciousness of the ground-state, and it will be part of the field which it witnesses. So there is no de-totalisation, the characteristic form of dualistic and binary theories of perception, reflected in much actual perceptual practice. Moreover, in holistic perception or attention from the ground-state, the observer will be aware of peripheral cues and even, under the appropriate circumstances, of phenomena and happenings which do not fall within his field of vision as normally understood. Actually we all are familiar with this. Not only the case of being aware when we are being stared at from behind, but when we are driving, suddenly becoming aware of a danger. In perception coming from the ground-state we have, so to speak, 360 degrees awareness, even though we will be focused or attending primarily to one aspect of our total field of perception.

This brings out an even more basic point which is that in our ground-state we will be recursively embedding new knowledges, virtues and skills into the ensemble already possessed by our embodied personalities. When we do so there will be elements of duality and externality but in virtue of understanding ourselves as a field and in virtue of the field-like qualities of the ground-state then there is no problem in accommodating such necessary duality. For example it would be absurd to suppose that a realised being never had to reflect or think or talk about something or learn something new. Even more importantly such a being, committed to the struggle for universal self-realisation, will be engaged in transformative activity to eliminate heteronomy, wherever it exists in the world. As such he or she will be a transformer and a warrior, albeit generally (but not always) fighting, on a different ground from what they are fighting, namely the heteronomous forces and entities which inhabit and so imprison

the beings whose realisation he finds himself committed to. Thus he is fighting the force with the weapon of love, chasing it back to the energised ground-state it bleeds; whereas it is fighting his being (or person) with hate, the hate however giving away the love upon which it ontologically depends.

So understanding this conception means that it is possible to be simultaneously in two modes of consciousness without losing non-duality. Thus as a witness to its own ground-state, the being at the ground-state is at the transcendental consciousness of his ground-state and that ground-state and its consciousness defines a field of awareness and activity at one with and continuously recursively embedded, after, so to speak, encounters in the world of duality and indeed dualism, within the expanding field of its ground-state.

Now just as your non-dual field is differentiated, so you can **detach** or disconnect yourself from any part of it, de-totalising that part so as to make it the object of subsequent strategic action (or 'inner work') or trace and chase it back to the ground-state, whence it became a part of you, even a need for you. Of course unless you have cleared and re-filled that part of you which allowed it to become a need for you, then you will be prone to a subsequent, so to speak, 'invasion'. But remember you cannot be a victim or prisoner indefinitely, unless you choose to be, that is, unless there is a self-victimisation or self-imprisonment at work. Therefore, even before, or alongside, the chase, look within, to that within you (co-present in you) which you are chasing outside you. All this is implied, of course, by the standpoint of self-referentiality. The conceptual point is that both differentiation and detachment, including perceptual detachment (acting like referential detachment in language), are possible within a unified field, just as dual and even oppositional dual or dualistic activity is consistent with non-dual being. The moment that is being isolated here is that of reflexive shift back within a holistic field, corresponding to the moment of dualistic encounters and reflections in embodied activity.

It might well be said that all this is a very difficult exercise. Because if one has a problem or a worry, and if this is obsessive or

compulsive, how does one avoid duality? But if you have an obsessive worry or a compulsive desire or something of that sort, then the procedure is exactly the same, you attend to that desire or worry, become fully aware of it, and you will not be in that desire but the observer of that desire or worry and as such you will not be worried. In other words even if you feel heavy, attend to your heaviness and you will feel light. Even if you are full of angst and dread, accept that condition of angst and dread, go into it, attend to it and you will no longer be in that condition but an observer of that condition, free (at least for a time) from it.

This is reflexive, second-order awareness or shift back from a state of consciousness or awareness into a state of awareness of that state without judgement or any thought or negative emotion. Now if you attend in such a condition for long enough to your heaviness or concern or whatever, then not only will it be a part of you, but eventually by tracing it back to its sources you will dissolve that state. Of course it may be that it is simpler to take strategic action. But in principle it will always be better to take that strategic action from a point of consistency with, or better, being in, one's ground-state. The moral of this is: if you are not paying attention, attend to your inattention and then you will be in a state of attention and you, your ground-state will be aware of the problem and the power of your ground-state will normally be sufficient to dissolve or at least mitigate it.

Section 3: Enlightenment and the Conditions for Self-realisation

We have already seen in the Preface in rough outline what the conditions for enlightenment or self-realisation are. They essentially involve the elimination of elements in your embodied personality which are inconsistent with your ground-state. But to the extent that your embodied personality is not only not inconsistent with your ground-state, but is defined by a field centrally organised by your ground-state, then you will experience a greater degree of realisation; and without this accessing of your ground-state itself, you will probably not have the energy or the nous to

engage in the processes of shedding and clearing of your embodied personality, its field and its space.[4]

It becomes very important then to pursue dialectics of **inaction**, as I call them in *From East to West*. These are dialectics which involve clearing the space in which you can access your ground-state, in which the consciousness of your embodied personality can feel the presence of your transcendentally defined consciousness at your ground-state, so that you can become one with the monitor and witness of what you do. In fact self-realisation is you (as an embodied personality) **becoming** one with **you** (as your transcendentally real self): in short your becoming yourself. So principles of clearing, opening, making a gap, suspending thought, unthinking, being in the state of no-mind, freeing oneself from emotional turbulence or disturbance, not being engaged in judgement or memory or anticipation, neither dwelling in the past nor the future, neither at some other place nor half here and half there, fully attending to and in one's ground-state defines the dialectic of inaction or access. When you have accessed your ground-state and its consciousness, so to speak consciously, then obviously you need to practice that access, so that it is stabilised and you can use the energy and qualities of that ground-state, not least the power of the awareness that it gives you, to aid your project of shedding or eliminating or letting go of the blocks and constraints within your embodied personality which prevent it being at one and fully informed by your ground-state and its consciousness. In this the most important thing is witnessing.

You witness all your states, and when you catch yourself naming or judging when it is not necessary; when instead of experiencing life you just experience a life crisis or a life situation;

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[4] It is important to see that in the non-dual moments we have been talking about you are in your body, in your embodied personality, even though you are not attending to your body. Being in your body, being aware of its, so to speak, inner field, being aware of the flows of energy or *chi*, or you might say, the movement of consciousness within it, is an important part of the *integrity* of, that is the unifying character of, an embodied personality at one with and rooted in its ground-state.

when you find yourself dwelling in a time which is not now or in a place which is not here or when you find yourself engaged in obsessive thought then you attend to that distraction or disturbance and in that act of attention you are no longer disturbed and you have made the clearing that allows you to access the consciousness of your ground-state, your witness.

What we have here, after the dialectics of **access** and of becoming aware of your own awareness in your field of awareness, or of **witnessing** generally, is a two-way dialectic of **watchfulness**. And this is the third step, the third dialectic of inaction on the path to self-realisation. You watch yourself and your mind and your emotions and then you go into their relevance for coherence, their clarity. For instance, is a worry, a concern for the future relevant now? Thinking about the future certainly plays a role in the context of one's life, but worry is an obsessive displacement of present-moment awareness onto the future, so that you are living in the future and not now; in the same way you may be living in the past, in nostalgia or whatever. When you catch yourself in the past or the future like this or in a relationship of attachment or aversion to some object or identifying with your ego or your pursuit of some egoistical goal, then by that act of attention you immediately **dis-identify**, take yourself away from that false identification with what is not you, back to yourself as the witness and the conscious attender in the moment here, through the mediation of your body, to what is happening or of relevance now.

Strategic thinking and dualistic activity, planning in accordance with clock time, all these things play a part in life, but only if they are defined by the centrality of consciousness identified at a level which is outside thought, outside time, outside the past and the future, outside anywhere else but here, and a consciousness which is not in identification with any emotional pain or suffering or gratification or clinging to something physical, relative and transitive. In other words you shift the burden of proof, and if you want to engage in speculation about the future, then you justify it in terms of and in the light of present-moment consciousness at the appropriate stage in clock time, tensed time, the time or times of the world of duality. So, the next moment in this

dialectic is **dis-identification**: you dis-identify with everything which is not your ground-state. Then you are at one with your ground-state, that is you. And, when you have reached a point in which you are completely and fully at one with your self, i.e. your ground-state, then, in the field defined by that ground-state you engage of necessity in activities which are dual or even dualistic, but as flowing from the dharma your ground-state entails for your activity in the field of relativity, they are recursively unified within the field of your ground-state, though they may be merely consistent with its most essential qualities. You are a non-dual being engaged in non-oppositional and oppositional dual activity. But wherever possible you bring the presence and energy of your ground-state to bear on everything you do. Because whatever it is you choose to do, you can never out-perform your ground-state and never second guess the information potentially at its disposal. For enfolded within your ground-state is the totality of the cosmic envelope, including the ground-states and alethic truths of all other beings and aspects of the cosmos.

We then come on of course to the dialectics of **shedding**, clearing the flaws and heteronomies, the blocks and constraints on your autonomy within the field of your embodied personality, possessing the aspect of a TINA compromise formation. The key point here is of course self-awareness of those flaws, and total acceptance of them, as a prerequisite for the work needed to eliminate them, be it a strategic project or a mobilisation of the power of present-moment perception. It is also important to appreciate that they must be accompanied by two other kinds of dialectics: dialectics of **embodiment** and dialectics of **engagement**, of practice or **action**. In dialectics of embodiment, we embody the presence, consciousness, etc. of the ground-state and the acquisition of all the knowledge, virtues, skills and insight which it is necessary for you to imbue your embodied personality with for it, so to speak, to function as the embodied aspect or form of your ground-state in the world. And then there are of course dialectics of praxis, or what I have called engagement, that is of realisation, dialectics aimed at and for the self-realisation of all beings everywhere.

Before I come on to dialectics of action, it is important to dwell a bit more on the question of embodiment, particularly in

relation to the old dispute between 'materialism' and 'idealism'. Because everything is implicit in matter, enfolded in or diachronically emergent out of it, and because it can be transcendentally identified in consciousness, including higher (including supramental) levels of consciousness, matter must be regarded as a *synchronic* emergent power of consciousness as well as consciousness being regarded as a diachronically emergent power of matter and, at any one time, a synchronic emergent power of matter. Considering now matter as a synchronic emergent power of consciousness, this is to say that consciousness is implicit, enfolded or involved in it. Insofar as this enfolding happened, we would have to say it involved a process in time, or at least a diachronic process of creation, so we have also matter as a diachronically emergent power of consciousness, the product of a logically prior moment of **involution**, prior to its being enfolded, and far prior to its being unfolded in the natural process of evolution we are all familiar with.

Can we therefore say that matter and consciousness are on a par? No. We have no grounds for supposing that all consciousness must presuppose matter, whereas we have grounds for supposing that all matter is implicitly or explicitly conscious. Moreover the paradigm of direct mind-to-mind, or feeling-to-feeling, action suggests that consciousness and vitality are irreducible to their material conditions. That there are material, e.g. physiological, conditions for consciousness for the human species, as we know it now, is important to register. Hence the need, when we are talking of self-realisation, for a clear, healthy, energised, balanced body and the clearing of physical (and more generally n-dimensionally generalised social) space from the husks and residues, ranging from disused coal mines to the debris of downtown in an inner city to the clearing of the pollution that affects the air we breathe. Clearing of the material conditions is a prerequisite for universal self-realisation. There is one further important consideration. Looking at the phenomenon of levels of consciousness from the standpoint of 6R, we can say that higher levels, and higher contents at any one level, of consciousness are, so to speak, shielded by something like a 'ring pass not', the condition of passing through which lies in the awakening within the

being or species concerned of the powers and possibilities enfolded within it, of a level of attunement of the requisite refinement or subtlety. This also means that we cannot say, a priori, how deep or fixed the cosmic envelope is. It may stretch to encompass levels of consciousness of which we are, at the level of our own evolution, unaware.

If the dialectics of inaction are essentially concerned with **clarity**, then these dialectics of realisation or action are concerned with a **commitment to transformation**, including social transformation. There is no opposition at all here, as I have shown elsewhere. I have also argued that whatever objective you set yourself in life, eventually you will be forced into a position where you will realise that *only* consistency with your ground-state and therefore clarity and coherence with it is a feasible and sustainable way of life. Anything else will be illusory and transitory—for the simple reason that whatever objective you set yourself, it will be important to be clear about it. And being clear about it means you will have to define your objective, and be single-pointed about it (and of course your objective may not be one, you may have a bouquet of objectives you wish to achieve). Lack of clarity about what you want in life can only further confuse, dissipate and split your intentionality, consciousness and energy.

But this single-pointedness, and that clarity which informs it, can never be realised if it is inconsistent with your ground-state. For because of the stratification of your being, the fact that all other states of being depend on and are informed by the presence of your ground-state, you can never escape its intentionality. Any intentionality inconsistent with that of your ground-state will split your intentionality and result in a counter-finality, i.e. the failure to fulfil what you intend (want, need or whatever). And split intentionality will return, like karma, as something which binds you and prevents your freedom and self-realisation. Once you understand the necessity for self-realisation, then you might say, well, if that is necessary, then I had better become realised in order to achieve whatever I want to achieve in life. But unfortunately you can never be in your ground-state while you think in terms of instrumental rationality. For action coming

from the ground-state does not know a split between end and means, the end is the means.

At each point if the goal is total clarity, or emptiness of heteronomous (or indeed any) content, or infusion with love, then the best way to attain it is by being clear or empty or full of love. But this is not only the best way, it is the only way. Because otherwise you will be imparting an element of heteronomy, an element which isn't at one with your end into the means to obtain it. So although it is true to say that you will be set on a dialectic to realisation and first consistency and then grounding or stabilisation in your ground-state, it is not true to say that you can achieve that unity in an instrumental or strategic way. In exactly the same way, if you are a realised being, you will not be in your ground-state and committed to the freedom of all other beings because their lack of freedom impedes your own. It will not be because their unfreedom impedes your own freedom, but rather because their own freedom *is* also your own freedom. Because at the level of your ground-state there is no separation between your and any other being, and therefore their lack of fulfilment or their unfreedom is experienced as acutely as your own (if not actually sensually, at least in terms of your commitment).

But now we come to what is perhaps the most important point. If the rest of the universe is enfolded within you, then we must ask what it is that explains why only some bits of it are, so to speak, awakened, only some bits of it are experienced by you. These are those bits of the universe which have been explicated, unfolded from your being, those bits have evolved out of their unfolded state. As you develop and grow new bits of your total enfolded being move into a state of being powers or potentials which can become tendencies that you may acquire, and then tendencies in a state of readiness to be realised, which are your skills, your virtues and your existing knowledge, as part of or inbuilt into the core of your being. One could picture the stratification of the great chain of being as a hierarchy enfolded within you. And then you would say that there were certain powers or aspects or entities in the cosmos which were very different from you and your capacity to be one with them, to become them

would be severely limited. There would be others, say sentient ones, with which you had much in common. And then there would be others which were very like you. And the resonance effects set up by these others would awaken those elements which were like them within you, if the vibration was close or if the resonance was strong. This is how, at a deep esoteric level, reciprocity occurs.

Here reciprocity is not exchange but resonance. But actually once again we need to radically critique our received models of things and events. For if something is exactly like you, and direct consciousness-to-consciousness action is possible, then it will not be circumscribed by physical parameters such as the speed of light. So you will be affected instantly in a like or similar way to something else exactly like or similar to you. Thus we have already seen that in the case of the power of perception the perceiver immediately affects the object he perceives. There is an immediate complementarity here. I cannot go any further into the principles of reciprocity here.

In sum, the dialectics of inaction encompass access, made possible by systematic retreat, attention or awareness, and this includes becoming aware of your own awareness in your field of awareness, and therefore witnessing; and especially watchfulness. **Acceptance** is a prerequisite for both dis-identification, including detachment and disconnection, and release, clearing or elimination of residues (including karmic residues and embodied husks), all leading to generalised shedding. Then re-identification sets in motion a process of embodiment including in-building of new knowledge, virtues, skills and insight. Then we have the dialectics of engagement and action generally, oriented to the self-realisation of all beings and the clearing of the spaces within which they exist, including their material conditions for flourishing. Later I will argue that as your consciousness expands so do the criteria for reflexivity or the unity of theory and practice. The more you are aware of or can witness or relate to, the bigger the 'self', which needs to be unified in a process which has no foreseeable end. The final point to note here is the unity between the sense of reflexivity as the unity of theory and practice and reflexivity as the capacity to witness, monitor and check an ever expanding field with which the ground-state you are is aware of

and/or identifies with, as the potentialities within it are progressively awakened. All of this means that the criteria for enlightenment and emancipation are themselves evolving as part of the evolutionary process.

Section 4: The Evolution of Enlightenment

I have already noted the way in which the theory of co-presence means that the process of evolution is in principle open for species, as well as the beings belonging, at any moment of time, to them. If everything is implicit in any one object, then there are enormous possibilities of awakening, unfolding and consolidating or in-building new powers in the evolutionary process. This encompasses something akin to the alchemical transmutation of species, or elements, something which evolution of necessity, even as currently understood, implies. This does however raise a problem of how we conceptualise the goal of unity, in one's ground-state, with the totality or the cosmic whole, or its ground, which I have called 'god-realisation'.

There are in principle four possibilities:

1. The initial state, that of a creator god, is fixed, and mankind and other species evolve, until we reach the point of universal god-realisation, which defines a fixed end for an evolutionary cycle. An alternative version of this scenario is that god evolves, as in an expanding universe. This is a possibility which is indicated by the sense in which realisation entails maximising negentropy, or free unbound energy. This then leads into the second possibility.
2. Both the initial creator god and mankind and/or other species evolve, so that a distance or gap between the two is always preserved, unless mankind evolves faster when eventually it would catch up and god-realisation would imply, once more, identity with the initial creator.
3. The initial creation was not out of nothing, but formed in the context of a fuller, wider, totality of which we may or may not come to be aware, and out of which it evolved as any organic process. In other words there was not a single

monistic origin for our cosmos, but it is part of a wider geo-history of which we are not, at present, aware.

4. Alongside this conjecture, there is the possibility that the cosmic totality, as we perceive it, is also subject to the play of not just forces unknown to us, as is implied by 1M and 6R, but also to extra-cosmic and criss-crossing, intra-influencing and parallel universes. This will again exercise a complicating role on our evolutionary processes. The possibility of this is enhanced by the situation of a sui generis 6R realm, for these other universes may affect levels from which we are ontologically or epistemically precluded from accessing.

In any event, we have the conclusion that since evolution is an open-ended process, awakening, realisation or enlightenment need, to be relativised and conceived as in principle subject to evolution, so that they cannot be identified for any one being or species in an absolute manner. For if mankind is implicit in an amoeba, then self-realisation for that amoeba can mean anything from maximum fulfilment for an amoeba (of its particular type, always potentially unique), to attaining the level of self-realisation for an explicitly conscious and potentially self-conscious being such as man, into which that amoeba may evolve through various levels and thresholds of realisation, some of which may depend upon the wakening of powers and potentials, which are at present only implicit in man and only awakened in species of which we have no knowledge or awareness.

At a more quotidian level it could be argued that in Buddha's day, merely individual self-realisation did make sense, in that it was possible to conceive of a complete and free being, independently of large chunks of the socialised earth, just as in the Middle Ages the realisation of peoples in unknown continents, such as America or Australasia or Antarctica, was not on the agenda then. However in our day the, so to speak, contingent but very central interconnectedness of all human beings means that merely individual self-realisation is impossible, in the sense that it can only be attained if all other human beings on the planet, and other species too, are liberated from the systems, which human kind has created, which oppress them.

Section 5: Being and Consciousness

When you are at your ground-state then your consciousness is one with the consciousness of your ground-state, that is transcendental consciousness. Now we have seen that a realised being is not necessarily in his or her ground-state, merely that he will be in states which are consistent with his ground-state, that is he will be a non-dual being who is not always in a state of transcendental consciousness. However his ground-state will still be ingredient in everything he does and his non-dual being will recursively embed all his dualistic activity within a totality which is securely rooted in or at one with his ground-state.

In the same way his consciousness will be embedded or enfolded in transcendental consciousness which will be ingredient as a factor or component in all his other states of consciousness, including states of intense activity which are removed from the ground or rest/zero/null/vacuum state consciousness of transcendental consciousness. Of course the more one is in one's dharma, the more effortlessly one's actions will be and the more one's activity will be in a state of consciousness which is close to or approximates that of the transcendental consciousness of the ground-state which monitors or witnesses all one's activity, wherever the consciousness of one's embodied personality is. Just to make this very clear, while your ground-state is always in transcendental consciousness, your embodied personality is only in transcendental consciousness when it is in your ground-state. To be realised is not to be in your ground-state, it is to be in your embodied personality in consistency with your ground-state, which is why you cannot experience *samadhi* or transcendental consciousness the whole time—if you are to engage in oppositional and non-oppositional dualistic activity in the world. But the more you are in your dharma, the more rapidly you in-build new skills into the totality of your being so that they flow spontaneously from your innermost being, the less duality and heteronomy you have to deal with in your environment, the more expanded you are as an embodied personality, the more developed and all-rounded your skills in life, the closer to your ground-state consciousness will be your non-dualistic and dualistic activity.

A reason for stressing this is because it is sometimes thought that an enlightened being is one who is in transcendental consciousness all the time. An enlightened being is one who is entirely consistent with his ground-state—that is he is at one with but not necessarily or normally at his ground-state. *Samadhi* is therefore neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for enlightenment.

Now once we have this paradigm of the ground-state as ingredient in everything that the realised being does, and of transcendental consciousness as being ingredient and constitutive of all his states of consciousness, though they will also contain aspects which are non-transcendental, then we can see that exactly the same theorem applies to non-realised beings and heteronomous personalities and non-dual modes of behaviour too. For the ground-states of such beings are ingredient in all their activities. Even if those activities are entirely inconsistent with them, they constitute an element, a vital element without which those activities would not occur. Similarly transcendental consciousness is ingredient, a necessary condition and present in all other states of consciousness, even those states which are embodied states of consciousness associated with activities which are inconsistent with our ground-states. Understanding both these aspects with respect to the properties of the ground-state in general means understanding that we could do nothing intellectually or mentally without our creativity, nothing emotionally without our love, and perform no act without our capacity for right-action and the spontaneous element it embodies. Indeed we could not even be or exist without the characteristics of will, enfolded intelligence and energy associated with just being. This makes it easier for us to see that, as we possess and must exercise these qualities anyway, the simple and natural thing to do in life is to get rid of those qualities and aspects of one's personality emergent from, but inconsistent with, them.

This idea of the transcendental ingredience of the ground-state and of the consciousness of the ground-state, that is transcendental consciousness, in all other states of one's being and states of one's consciousness, whether these are consistent or at odds with one's ground-state, is itself an important and empow-

ering one. The thing to remember is that you can never lose that ingredience, the ingredience of the energy, intentionality and consciousness of your ground-state and the other qualities it possesses; and that you can never lose your dharma, which imposes an increasingly insistent intentionality the clearer, and the closer to realisation, you get.

Section 6: Watchfulness and the Critique of Heteronomy

Self-realisation involves not only empowerment, but as a necessary condition, freedom from all heteronomies and constraints. This will involve breaking from the bondage of not only systems of thought, ideology, received opinion, organised religions, codes of conduct, but all forms of authority and tyranny. For to be free is to be spontaneously creative and loving. But we are not only, in freedom, spontaneously creative and loving; but also equally, in view of our location on the cosmic envelope, capable of spontaneously accessing not only our alethic truth, but the alethic truth of all beings; and therefore spontaneously knowing and right. Moreover our location on the cosmic envelope automatically entails a union with all other beings, i.e. a commitment to the eudaimonistic society and universal self-realisation, i.e. to the establishment of heaven on earth or the absorption of earth into heaven.

Our mistake is to seek, heteronomously, lasting fulfilment **from something or someone other than ourselves**. This is just what we cannot obtain: we cannot obtain our peace, happiness, creativity, etc. by someone or something other than ourselves. This is the truth of the principle of self-referentiality, which implies a critique of all heteronomy.

Furthermore this implies a dialectical move, of *negative thinking*. This involves considering, more precisely observing, what happens when we are *not* at the ground-state, the state of infinite potentiality. Let us look at the ways in which we get in the way of, block ourselves; in which we stop ourselves from being or becoming what we truly are. Let us look at the ways in which we are complicit in the formation of a heteronomous totality, starting in the first place by considering or asking how we actually are, not how we wish ourselves to be. The importance of this is

clear—for unless we get ourselves straight, unless we understand our own embodied personalities, we will not be able to understand let alone change society. The priority of self-change, and the priority of self-observation in the process of self-change, must not be misunderstood. For the principle of simultaneity implies that action, necessarily by oneself, automatically entails action on all the other planes of social being. So that we do not in any way separate or seclude ourselves from society—quite to the contrary, as I have stressed, that is precisely the mistake of the beautiful soul.[5] To be is indeed to be related and, moreover, our relations with others are part of our subjective constitution (insofar as we are internally related to the subjectivity of those beings, which in our actual formations we always are). The point being made here is that unless we get ourselves, and our relationships with others right, we will project onto society, and in particular onto those 'significant others' with which we are most intimately connected (and with whom we may share either karmic [earthly] or dharmic [heavenly] relationships) our problems, our weaknesses, our issues (our jealousies, grievances, grudges, problems, etc.) on to society, and in particular to those persons with whom we are most closely, or immediately engaged.

Let us look at how a block operates, how potentially free, unbound energy becomes fixated or stuck or alternatively—in the case of a weakness of attention/one-pointedness/mindfulness—becomes dissipated or dispersed; at how we can come to repeat or replicate an aporetic situation which, if only we could access our spontaneous creativity (or our inner knowingness) we would be able to resolve.

The first step is seemingly the most innocuous. We *name* the phenomenon or situation, i.e. 'collect' it (under a universal), which immediately sets up a stimulus-generated, conditioned response pattern and we do the same thing again, that is we

[5] This was the great contribution of Wittgenstein's private language argument distinct from what is in effect my 'no language argument'. This is of course the argument that stresses the transcendental necessity for silence, unthought, no noise, and stillness, including the absence of emotional turbulence for the full emancipation of ground-state qualities such as creativity, pure love, etc.

replicate the situation, mire ourselves further into the mess, and/or generate a karmic necessity, for our action entails the return of the situation at some future point in time, until we can enact a more creative response to it, which will allow us to transcend that situation and continue our dialectical journey in life.

Supposing every time you go to a certain place or find yourself in a certain situation you find yourself in an emotional state of anxiety or irritability, without accessing your creative potential you will merely inevitably find yourself in a repetition syndrome of your anxious or irritable state. How, then, do you access this creative response?

The first thing is to observe what it is that is actually happening when we are in that situation. We look at, that is become conscious, as observers, without judgement, emotion or any attitude, of what is happening within us, that is the formation and rhythmic patterns of our anxious or irritable state. In this mere act of observing that state we will now be in a different state of consciousness or awareness. We will no longer be in that state or mood of anxiety or irritation, but observers of it. We can now begin to see how watchfulness can become a meditation technique in its own right. By just looking, for example, at our looking judgementally, we will no longer be judging, i.e. in a state of judgement, but just looking (without judgement—or even thought) we are now looking non-judgementally, and we are approaching, getting closer to the space (of free creativity), the ground-state, the state of love (and forgiveness) from which our creativity, lovingness and knowledgability all arise. And by looking non-judgementally, that is just by looking itself, at how we stop ourselves looking judgementally at a situation, which may be ourselves, we begin the move away from levels of consciousness which interfere with that pure looking, without distortion or disturbance in our looking; and without dissipation or dispersion of the energy which would otherwise have been involved.

The point here is that it is not only that only by looking at a repeated pattern we shall begin to see how we can change it, but also that, by looking, we are moving to a vantage point in which we are not only not in that pattern, and also in a position to be able to create the resolution to the repetitive syndrome within

which we are trapped, should the need arise again, but that the more we practice this inwardisation, this watchfulness, this capacity to achieve distance from our states of awareness by becoming aware of those states of awareness, a power and a freedom of our alethic selves, the more we become that still, silent, watchful source of consciousness from which the whole hive of our creative activity can freely and spontaneously stem. The method is the goal; and the goal is the path.

In becoming more aware of our states of awareness we get closer to freedom and closer to ourselves. If we can stop the mind, we can get closer to that which, in mental activity or in an emotional disturbance, distracts and detracts from our spontaneous creative energy, and takes us away from that vantage point—of the ground-state, the level of the unlimited self, of infinite correlation, of inner submissiveness reflected in outer responsiveness, that level in which we spontaneously express our love, creativity, knowledgability, manifest in action (including of course speech action), in the multiplicity of our embodied and practical activities in the world. The practice of witnessing ourselves, watching ouselves, leads inevitably to a transmutation in the self from what is witnessed to the witness, and as we become our witness in this very witnessing, we ascend to alethic levels (or, put another way, descend to the greatest ontological depth, of the cosmic envelope).

And this very effort—of attention, of watchfulness—will itself absorb us into ourselves and help to create that platform from which we alone can truly initiate change. This dialectic of watchfulness is the way we ascend/descend to the cosmic envelope, the moment of silence, the gap, the vacuum, the hole (the hole that makes us whole), the hiatus or space between thoughts, to that zone of creativity, love, which is our birthright and freedom. By the same token we can now be focused on our activity from the cusp of the whole, in which intentions are released into the world. And able to act from a position closest to the cosmic envelope, that infinite silent space from which right-action, loving creativity, and true wholeness itself inexorably flows.

Any received belief, any repetitive pattern of thought or action, will inevitably divide/separate/split/alienate, and perpetuate

the state of dilemmatic being which is characteristic of an alienated world. To let go of all fixed belief systems, and even be able to let go of 'letting go' is a precondition for freedom.

Employing this technique of watchfulness we will be able to note how we freeze the future by defining ourselves in certain ways. Not naming is the prerequisite here.

Come to this street with
only your sweet fragrance.

Don't walk into this river wearing a robe;
paths go from here to there,
but don't arrive from somewhere! It is time now to live naked.

Rumi

Chapter Two

The Alienated Self and the Kabbala of Transformation

Section 1: Self-alienation in an Age of Global Crisis

If there is a fundamental problem in the human condition today it is the widespread feeling of a lack of unity in our being, our activity, our transactions with each other, and more basically social transactions generally, and with our natural and material context. The most common philosophical name for this sense of lack of unity is alienation. We all feel to a greater or lesser extent alienated from ourselves, our activities, each other, the social structure and the natural world in which society is embedded. Alienation, like any social phenomenon or event, has to be understood in terms of four planes of social being:

[a] our material transactions with nature;
[b] our social interaction with others;
[c] social structure;
[d] the stratification of our embodied personalities.

MetaReality shows that and how we can become non-alienated or non-dual beings; and attempts to map out the ways in which we can achieve this goal. But it will also be stressing that there are important senses and ways in which we are already

engaged in non-dual states and phases of our being and activity, in which we are not alienated from ourselves, our activities, each other, etc.; and that these non-dual states and phases of our being underpin and sustain those dual structures and states which proliferate, dominate and hold sway in the alienated world of contemporaneity which is acutely experienced as a gathering widespread global crisis.

To capture the sense in which non-duality sustains and underpins the world of duality I have coined the term 'metaReality'. This is designed to pick out the way in which what is screened or occluded and dominated, namely those non-dual states and phases of our being, in which I argue we manifest, spontaneously and unconditionally, our free, creative, loving, right-acting natures, is nevertheless a unilateral condition of that which dominates and occludes it (i.e. which is therefore asymmetrically dependent on it). That is to say that the dual world of our experience, which screams at us in television headlines and in the demands of our morning post, is nevertheless only able to survive in virtue of the existence and efficacy of precisely those qualities which are necessary to transcend our contemporary malaise, our global crisis. So the vicious world that we have created or sustained depends precisely upon those virtuous qualities and would not exist for a moment without them, which only have to be recognised and released for us to escape from our contemporary crisis, our self-made malaise. This in a nutshell is the argument of the book.

It is by no means an accident that philosophers, social scientists and politicians, reflecting the socially, spontaneously generated ideology of the dualistic world of demi-real duality, should not have hitherto detected very clearly, or rather (not necessarily consciously) obscured, the non-dual basis of our being and life. To understand the non-dual basis of our existence, and that of the oppressive world of duality, is itself empowering; but additionally needs to be acted on in ways which will roll back and transcend the world of duality (whose reality the philosophy of metaReality in no way denies) until we are as free as we can be.

Section 2: The Analysis of the Self

The Nature of the Self: 'Who Am I?'

Little fly
Thy summers play
My thoughtless hand
Has brushed away.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

(William Blake)

Cottlestone, Cottlestone, Cottlestone pie,
A fly can't bird, but a bird can fly
Ask me a riddle and I reply:
'Cottlestone, Cottlestone, Cottlestone pie'.

Cottlestone, Cottlestone, Cottlestone pie,
A fish can't whistle and neither can I.
Ask me a riddle and I reply:
'Cottlestone, Cottlestone, Cottlestone pie'.

Cottlestone, Cottlestone, Cottlestone pie,
Why does a chicken, I don't know why.
Ask me a riddle and I reply:
'Cottlestone, Cottlestone, Cottlestone pie'.

(A.A. Milne, *Winnie the Pooh*)

The nature of the self has struck philosophers, and indeed many ordinary reflective people, as something of a mystery. The source of the paradoxical nature of the self is that whatever it is that is said about the self, there is something other than that which is said which is tacitly presupposed. Thus when a philosopher such as the 18th century British empiricist David Hume claims that when he examines the nature of the self, it disappears, we can ask him: who is it, then, who announces the disappearance of the

self? Or to take a more contemporary example, if a postmodernist or deconstructionist rejects the notion of the subject, then he can certainly be challenged in the same way, namely by asking who or what it is that articulates this thesis—and if he denies that he is a person, or a speaker, surely he or his discourse begins to lose whatever plausibility and coherence it had; and it lays itself wide open to the *ad hominem* objection as to why anything at all that seems to come from what looks like his mouth should be taken at all seriously. These problems are multiplied when we notice some features of the linguistic behaviour of the pronoun 'I'. For this is both a universal applying indifferently to any being who utters it; and a particular designating a unique individual. Moreover, even as a particular what it designates changes from context to context and over time. However whatever the self is, in our culture it is clearly very important. For it is 'I' who bears legal, social, economic and other rights and responsibilities; it is the individual subject–self 'I' who possesses and owns, votes, pays taxes, has parents and children, loves and fights, is penalised and rewarded, and becomes ill and dies. So the nature of the self should be something that in our society is supremely obvious, not the mystery that it evidently is. And this mystery or paradox is deepened when we come to appreciate that we live in a very egocentric world. For the classical and contemporary discourses of modernity are all structured around the notion of an individual subject, an ego set against an object world and opposed to other egos, to both of which he relates by means of conditional, instrumental rationality and both of which are described in terms of abstract actualist universality.

In this section I want briefly to recapitulate the argument of *Reflections on Meta-Reality* (Chapter 2), that the self in the sense of the *ego*, separated from other selves and a world of objects (including emotional states) to which it is attached is a 'causally efficacious' illusion. As (emergent) *embodied personalities* we do, however, exist; but our existence is both dependent and limited. On the other hand, everything we do depends upon a transcendentally *real self*, in essence unlimited, which is the ultimate source of our causal agency in the world. Moreover all projects of human emancipation tacitly suppose such a self. This 'self' has no

sense of self (and does not even talk or even think about itself), but is in fact our g*round-state*, the ultimate source of everything that we are and do and such ground-states of all beings, both human and non-human are connected by what I have called the *cosmic envelope* which bounds and binds the universe in which we are.

Thus the 'I' in the sense of '*ego*', that 'I' which apprehends itself as existing separately from and in opposition to all other I's and asserted against an object world, both of which may be regarded as a field for the ego's play and manipulation, that I is an illusion—in the sense that it has no real object; just as a mirage is an illusion. But though an illusion, it is like a mirage causally efficacious, and as such is real—that is the illusion is real, though it remains an illusion, i.e., has no real object. This is what I have called '*demi-reality*'. This 'I', this little self, is, however, a property of real (non-illusory) *embodied personalities.* These are complex relationally defined and constituted, stratified, differentiated and changing constituents of what I have called *relative reality.* Underneath such embodied personalities are *transcendentally real* selves which are the source of their causal agency and powers, which are unlimited and absolute realities. Thus what we think we are is a mixture of an illusory ego, a real but limited embodied personality and an absolute, unlimited, transcendentally real being, for the most part occluded and dominated by the realities which depend on it. What the philosophy of metaReality argues is that:

1. We can *access* this transcendentally real self which is everywhere presupposed (and it shows how we can open to it by suspending the normal operations of the mind);
2. We can *witness* this self, at rest and gradually in everyday life in activity in an expanding holistic field of consciousness, awareness and perception;
3. We can not only experience the self, which is demonstrably all the while aefficacious in our activity, however (TINA) compromised, but use it to *dissolve* the ego, and *transmute* the mind and *transform* the social forms associated with it; and that

4. We can, must and will be re-united, as embodied personalities, with our transcendentally real selves which are our ground-states and our *self-alienation* terminated; and that
5. In this process, we will be simultaneously engaging in action oriented to the alchemical transmutation or transformation or overcoming of alienation at all the other planes of social being; and in doing so, we will be acting so as to support and empower the self-realisation of all other beings located on the *cosmic envelope* which connects us with the rest of creation, including those at present alienated, perhaps as a result of the activity of humankind, from their *ground-states*; and that
6. The overcoming of self-alienation is enlightenment or self-realisation and that it embraces commitment to the *universal self-realisation*, and hence the *evolution*, of all beings in the cosmos.

According to the philosophy of metaReality the world of duality, which is the world of relative reality is underpinned, constituted and englobed by a deeper world of non-duality or absolute reality. However in our contemporary societies, the realm of duality or reality is itself dominated by a realm of dualism, dichotomy, alienation and split, namely a sub-realm of demi-reality. And this sub-realm of demi-reality dominates the domain of relative reality so that the dominant demi-reality within relative reality dominates and obscures the domain of non-duality on which it entirely depends. The upshot of the argument of this book is that:

1. Though we can never eliminate the features of relative reality, of duality in our life, by recognising and expanding the zone of non-duality and absolute reality in our being, the necessary dual activities in which we, as reflective, language-using beings in an open, differentiated and structured world, need to engage can be non-oppositional and non-alienated. They would then be merely challenges to explore an ever-expanding horizon.
2. We can eliminate dualistic demi-reality, the world of alienation and split, in which our necessarily dualistic activity characteristically takes on an oppositional and antagonistic

form. The world of multiple alienation, at all four planes of our social being, is characterised by evident crisis and few would deny that on any extrapolation of current trends, is unlikely to survive for long.

In developing our potentialities and powers, we reach a point in which we realise that it is necessary to shed our sense of ego, our sense of separateness from things in the world, alongside all other illusory and heteronomous sources of determination. In shedding our sense of separateness from the rest of being, our embodied personalities expand rather than contract; so that we become more free, fulfilled and more realised, unlimited selves. We gradually become only and essentially what we really are; but this becoming is in principle itself infinite and unlimited and has no foreseeable end. When we shed our ego, and the emotions so closely associated with it such as pride, fear, jealousy (all of which may in some circumstances play a positive and necessary role), we open out an infinite path in which we can become ever more rally what we always were and essentially are—without being also what we are essentially not.

Section 3: The Non-dual Basis of Being and Life

Using this analysis of the self as an example and a template, I now want to show how we can develop the principles of a philosophy of metaReality, stressing the ubiquity and priority of the non-dual over the dual and simultaneously proposing a novel conception of identity, identification and unification (what I will call a *rich* concept of identity as distinct from the shallow punctiform, atomistic or vacuous concepts of identity prevalent in contemporary philosophy). Here I will be recapitulating, with a slightly different emphasis, the argument in Chapter 4 of *Reflections on Meta-Reality*. To ease comparison I have deliberately numbered the principles I will be discussing in an identical way.

The terrain on which I wish to develop these principles is the terrain which is traditionally known in philosophical terminology as *'ontology'* meaning merely the study of being. Until relatively recently this was a taboo subject area in modern phi-

losophy as it was thought impossible to say anything about being independently of statements about our beliefs, knowledge or language about being. It is not difficult however to see that this view embodies both a fallacy and a circularity—for how can a something be pronounced to be a belief or item of knowledge, or a statement about being without that belief, supposed knowledge or statement, presupposing something about the structure of being, for that is the nature of the world described, believed or known.[1] In fact it is not difficult to see that ontology is inexorable; and the first principle I will articulate in building up a progression of the basic principles of the philosophy of metaReality is:

1. The Principle of the Inexorability of Ontology (irreducibility of being)

There are two important points here. The first is that there is no way one can avoid ontology. Secondly, if you do not consciously thematise or theorise ontology, the nature of the world, then you will be merely implicitly presupposing some pre-existing account of being, an account which may well be false and which you may well want to deny. So the implication is that we must become self-conscious about how we conceptualise being or the nature of the world and how it is conceptualised in contemporary societies, and consider whether their (and our) conceptualisations, be they explicit or implicit, are in fact right; or if they are right for a certain aspect or level of one's experience of reality, whether they are sufficiently broad or deep, that is right for reality as a whole, or some other qualitatively different domain of being.

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[1] These arguments have been marshalled in the philosophical literature of critical realism, from my *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975, 3rd edition, London and New York, 1997). I have called the fallacy of thinking that one can do without being the 'epistemic fallacy'. It is closely associated with the anthropocentricity and more especially egocentricity of western philosophical social thought in the wake of the *bourgeois, religious* and *scientific* revolutions associated with the rise of capitalism, the reformation and the Cartesian approach to science.

So how could one set about showing the necessity for ontology? Let us consider the fashionable philosophical ideology of postmodernism, which often denies the need for any conception of reality. So suppose that you question a postmodernist and ask him whether his discourse, what he says, is in fact real or not. Suppose he says that it is, then he is committed to accepting that discourse itself is real and so the thin edge of the wedge to ontology is established; and we can ask questions in ontology about the nature of the being of discourse and the extra-discursive real conditions for discourse. (It would be absurd for example to suppose that only language is real, when language is so clearly meshed into a network of social practices which assume a very concrete and material form—extending from bricklaying to such 'intellectual' practices as proving a theorem on a blackboard.)[2] Alternatively, the postmodernist may wish to stick with his denial of ontology and say 'no, my statement is not real'. In which case then there is no need to respond to him in any way at all, just turn your head. For how can something which is not real have any causal effect at all, and how can you listen and so respond to something which has not causally affected you.[3] It might be said that there is no way of getting at reality independently of our beliefs. But even if this were true, this would not show that the world or reality was our beliefs. (It would not show that a belief about a table was a table—you can have a meal or write upon a table, but not upon a belief about a table; conversely you can communicate a belief about a table, but not communicate a table.) But secondly it is not true that there is no way of getting at the world independently of our beliefs—thus we can sense, touch,

[2] In fact all the practices of high culture from painting or sculpting through to writing all presuppose definite material conditions of physical embodiment. What could a writer do without a pen; or who could he address without a printing press? Similarly what can a painter do without the materials necessary for the construction of a particular colour?

[3] This would be true even in the case of hallucinatory or illusory hearings. One would have to accept that the hallucination or illusion was real in itself, but counted as an illusion or hallucination in virtue of the fact that it did not have a real object, that is to say there was nothing in reality outside of the illusion or hallucination which that experience accurately reflected.

intuit, experience the world in all sorts of ways independently of and without belief or even thought (as well as of course in erroneous thought or belief).[4] We have direct, intuitive access to reality.

The second consequence of failing to appreciate the irreducibility of ontology is that we may willy-nilly presuppose a quite inadequate, and in fact we will actually have to presuppose, some ontology. Thus this may be an ontology adequate to the understanding of the natural sciences (or in particular natural science or phase of natural scientific activity), but not for understanding the different character of social reality. In fact until the time that transcendental (now generally known as critical) realist ontology was generated in the 1970s and subsequently developed over the last couple of decades, existing philosophy presupposed (tacitly or explicitly) an account of reality as flat (i.e. unstructured), uniform (i.e. undifferentiated) and repetitive (i.e. unchanging). What critical realism did was to show that. even experimental and applied scientific activity would be impossible if the world was that way. To appreciate why this must be so just consider what would be the point in engaging in a scientific experimental activity if the lawful character of the world was to be immediately experienced as a sequence of events, a constant conjunction of more or less atomistic events (as the empiricist orthodoxy would have it). The very fact that scientific activity is necessary to identify an epistemically or scientifically significant invariance means that order or lawfulness in the world cannot be posited at the level of events. For clearly the scientist has generated the sequence of events, or has at least been a causal agent without which that sequence of events would not have been forthcoing. And so if universality or order in science is to be maintained, then it cannot be identified at the level of the empirical (what is experienced) or the actual (what, like events, happen on the surface of the world), but must rather be understood in terms of the non-empirical, non-actual, real. If laws and the other

[4] It is not even true that we need to express our apprehension of reality in a belief-like or discursive way; we can do this in poetry, in dance through gesture and myriad other ways.

properties and aspects of being investigated by science continue to be construed as being empirical or actual, then we can only conclude that there are no laws in the world, that everything that happens is random or chaotic and even without any kind of explanation at all; that all the laws we have hitherto discovered are in fact false.[5] Analysis of scientific activity shows that the world investigated by science must be structured, differentiated and changing. Similarly analysis of the nature of social interactions shows that the social world must not only possess these characteristics, but possess differentiating features of their own, their meaningful or concept-dependent character, their human-activity dependence, their greater spatio-temporal relativity, their evaluative or value-impregnated character, etc., etc.[6] The history of that current in contemporary philosophical thought which has stressed the irreducibility of ontology, that is of the investigation of being, 'critical realism' is largely a progressive refinement of the nature of being presupposed in different domains of human activity and there are implications for projects of human empowerment and freedom.[7] The second principle is

2. The Principle of the All-inclusiveness of Ontology

This follows immediately from the first principle. For a moment's reflection will show that there is nothing that cannot be in being. Thus value judgements, contradictions, mathematical mistakes, illusions, evil, etc. all exist in being. This is really quite a radical position, because even where philosophers (like Kant) have formally denied ontology, they have wanted to say that nevertheless in some way (within the rubric of this overall denial) the positive or true or factual or whatever can exist, but not the negative, the normative, the erroneous or contradictory, etc. This is of course an absurd position. For unless an illusion or

[5] In Nancy Cartwright's book, *How the Laws of Physics Lie*, Oxford, 1982. (She would now accept a transcendental, dispositional realist analysis of laws.)
[6] Cf. my *The Possibility of Naturalism*. (Brighton, 1979, 3rd edition, London, 1998, and more generally *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*. (London, 1998, Part 2).
[7] Cf. *Reflections on Meta-Reality*.

a contradiction actually existed, what would be the point of unmasking the illusion or correcting the contradiction? Of course the fact that everything exists, everything is within being does not mean there are not distinctions (and connections) to be made within being. Thus, one convenient series of distinctions I have already noted between the domains of the real, the actual and the empirical. Another is between absolute, relative and demi-realities.[8] An absolute reality is an unchanging one, a relative reality is transient, and an illusory reality is characterised by the fact that it is false, that is to say that it has no real object in the world corresponding to it. Generally one would assume that all demi-realities must be relative realities, that the belief in phlogiston or witches, as causally efficacious superstitions, are transient, in the sense of changeable.

Let us now apply this to our tripartite analysis of the self. The ego, I have argued, is an illusion (i.e. a demi-reality), that is, understood as essentially involving a sense of our separateness from the rest of the world, it is false—we are inextricably interconnected with our fellow human beings, the social totality and the natural cosmos in which we are embedded and of which we are a part. It is easy to see that this feeling of independence is totally illusory. What is perhaps more interesting is to challenge the believer in an independent ego to say what it is about himself that he admires or wants—it may be a cup of coffee, obviously dependent on everything from the meteorological system (including ocean currents, etc.), through the plantations, to the systems of production and distribution which enable him access to the coffee. Or suppose he is proud of his achievements as a golfer, then it is easy to see that those achievements are entirely relational in character. To be is in fact to be related; and the assumption of separateness from the rest of being is an absurd illusion, in which nevertheless the majority of mankind is stuck. To begin to explain this we have perhaps to move on to the next level of understanding of the self, that is of the self as an embodied personality.

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[8] In the terminology I introduced in my book *From East to West*. London, 2000.

This self is not illusory; we are truly embodied personalities (themselves—ourselves—composed of a minimum of the three aspects of mind or thoughts, emotional makeup or feelings, and our physical embodiment); and in the physicality of our character as personalities we are spatio-temporally distinct from other embodied personalities. Moreover we can only act in the physical world from our embodied personality, just as we only immediately experience from it as well. As embodied personalities we are real and causally interconnected with the rest of being, but physically spatio-temporally distinct; and the distinctiveness of our physical, embodied being provides the only plausible material ground for a belief in an ego or our sense of separateness from other embodied personalities and the rest of the cosmos. We are physically distinctly individuated but inseparably connected with the rest of our species and the world. Our embodied personalities, though not illusory, are nevertheless highly changeable; and it is this which makes them 'relative realities'. Thus our very capacity to learn something new presupposes that we can change, are not fixed in our beliefs or skills. This is an extremely important point to appreciate. For the character of an absolute reality is that it is unchangeable. Therefore if we are talking about human liberation, emancipation or enlightenment, we are always talking about or at the level of the embodied personality, not the absolute or transcendentally real self (and which is already free; and needs only to be allowed to unfold or flower, but then in and as an embodied personality). Similarly the consciousness that we may wish to elevate, either in the sense of consciousness of oppression or in the sense of consciousness at a more subtle or reified level of being (e.g. as in transcendental consciousness) is always the consciousness of the embodied personality, never the consciousness of what in my terminology is the ground-state. Because transcendental consciousness is just consciousness at the ground-state, and as such it is always there, so that it is indeed unchangeable; what can change in the nature of our selves' consciousness is our capacity to access that level of consciousness (e.g. classically in such activities as meditation or prayer). The importance of this point cannot be over stressed because it means that the focus of emancipation or realisation, in the individual and in the universal

case, always has to be on actually manifest embodied personalities or beings in the cosmos. This immediately gives a this-worldly and practical orientation to the philosophy put forward in this book. One other feature worth noting is that we do not deny that relative reality is real, just because it is changeable. Such a denial would make the process of enlightenment or liberation itself unreal. In the same way we do not deny that *maya* or illusion is not real; the supposition that it is unreal makes demystification or enlightenment an unreal process.[9]

So if the absolute reality of the self, the transcendentally real self, is unchanging then in what sense and mode is it real? It is in the first case real as potential. In the second case it is real as actualised, both as consciousness and as an intentionality which will manifest itself in some way in our actions whether or not we are aware of it; and however much these actions are also co-determined by the efficacy of other elements within our embodied personality, elements other than and indeed possibly (and normally) inconsistent with our ground-states. Finally our absolute self is also manifest in experience, when we witness it in activity, or access it in a special activity such as meditation, or experience it directly in our spontaneous unconditional acts of identification with other beings and acts in the world, whether with other beings or not. Our absolute self is therefore at once real (and non-actual and non-empirical), as a potentiality not actualised or experienced, real and actual (in the ways outlined above), and also real and actual and empirical or experienced, again as just outlined.

The next principle is:

3. The Principle of Dispositional Realism

This is already implicit in what I have said about the other two principles. Dispositional realism says that the possible, the implicit, the enfolded is real, and in fact has a logical, epistemological and ontological priority over the actual, the explicit, the unfolded. It is easy to see why this must be so. For how could

[9] This is in opposition to many interpretations or formulations of classical Vedantic philosophy, along the lines of Shankara's system. These interpretations often also conflate demi-reality with duality.

anything be manifest in actuality which was not first a possibility; how could anything become explicit or articulate itself which was not already implicit; and how could anything unfold which was not already enfolded? Moreover the sum totality of possibilities must always exceed that of actualities; and at any rate even if we imagine a world in which every possibility could be actualised simultaneously by all beings everywhere, the actual could never exceed the potential. The importance of dispositional realism for emancipatory projects should be clear. For we must suppose that there are some things which it is possible for people to be, become or do which they are not at present, whether they are constrained by extraneous heteronomous forces or whether it is just simply something they have not yet become or done. The next principle is:

4. The Principle of Categorial Realism

This principle just makes explicit an implication of the second principle. For it says that the categories in terms of which we understand reality, like causality, space, time, freedom, creativity, love, totality, agency, reflexivity, housing, money, employment, etc., etc. do, if they are correct, actually pick out features of reality. Thus homelessness or poverty are real features of social situations, just as much as a particular person without a home or a person being impoverished—just as causality or lawfulness correctly characterises the world just as much as Boyle's Law or Ohm's Law does. The importance of this in projects of liberation again should be stressed. Because if we are not allowed to tackle questions at that deep and broad level which is categorial, then we will be reduced to such strategies as piecemeal social engineering; we will never be able to find systematic malaises or problems in our social order; and incidentally, there will be no real use for philosophical or any other kind of macroscopic analysis. Putting this the other way round, we can see the great social theorists, such as the Buddha, isolating a fundamental feature in social reality as our seeking after transitory forms of happiness underpinned by our *avidya* or practical ignorance as to the illusory or transient character of the relief of lack or suffering which we experience in our life. This lack (*dukka*) is a fundamental

feature of relative reality for the Buddha; and it is *only* by understanding in philosophical terms (but in terms of the very nature of your being), that there is no way it can be rectified at the level of which most of mankind seeks to rectify it, that we understand the true route to liberation (in Buddha's case the noble eight-fold path). Thus categorial realism sees philosophy and philosophical error as constitutive of being, as in fact constitutive of it in its most essential or basic level; and therefore any attempt at liberation which does not involve an appraisal of categories, that is those most fundamental features not only in terms of which being is thought but in terms of which the very nature of being is constituted, will be woefully inadequate. This gives an enormous emancipatory role for philosophy, while at the same time being a devastating indictment of existing philosophical professional practice.[10] At the very best the only conception of emancipation it can sustain is therefore one in which we improve our understanding of being, but not, on its theory, our being itself. This is equivalent to saying to a poor person that I will improve your understanding of your poverty; but of course I can do nothing about or towards transforming your poverty or impoverishment.

5. The Principle of Alethic Realism

In a way this principle is really established by the principle of categorial realism, the ideas that the categories are in a basic way really constitutive of being. Truth is of course also a category; but in the case of alethic realism we are not merely concerned with truth in general and in the abstract, but with particular truths of particular real things. What alethic realism claims is that there is a sense not just in which a true (like an illusory) proposition or belief is real, but a sense in which we can talk about truth as real, quite independently of beliefs, propositions and the like. Alethic realism is concerned with the truth of things, not (merely) beliefs; and such truths may exist quite independently

[10] Typically philosophers regard categories as not constitutive of being but merely classificatory or taxonomic devices for the understanding of being.

of any human consciousness, and may exist as indeed the conditions of possibility of human thought and the consciousness human beings possess in their embodied personalities. Thus the truth of human beings, of the human species considered as embodied personalities, may be their ground-states, of which they may be barely or really conscious. At a more prosaic level, the alethic truth of the fact that metals conduct electricity may consist in their possession of a free electron, or the alethic truth of the propensity of water to boil at one hundred degrees centigrade may lie in its molecular structure.

This position in which we can talk about the truth of things, as well as the truth of beliefs, propositions and so forth is also really only a halfway house to a further point. For there is a sense in which any form of realism, and with it the concept of reality itself, is implicated and defined in relation to subject–object duality, and in particular in relation to our thought or beliefs about it. Heisenberg put this point very well and more generally when, talking about the nature of the reality apprehended in quantum physics, he said 'what we observe is not nature in itself, but nature subjected to our method of questioning'. This dualistic implication of realism and reality applies even if one is realistic about transcendence, or formulates a system of transcendental realism, which explicitly asserts that there is more to being than our current knowledge of it. On the position that I am articulating here, truth is in fact a more basic conception than reality—for truth, unlike reality, is not necessarily implicated in a dualistic mode or structure of thought. Transcending dualism, and transcending realism (understood as involving subject–object duality)—even if that transcending of realism is actually arrived at by being realistic about transcendence—we move to the position of our metarealism or more precisely that of metaReality, which is designed precisely to capture a level of being which is—one implication of the 'meta'—beyond reality (realism, dualism, etc.) as customarily conceived. This is the level of non-duality, the level of the truth, captured in concepts such as the ground-state, the cosmic envelope, transcendental identification and co-presence, which underpins, sustains and constellationally englobes the world, the reality of duality, in which we customarily (but to an important

degree incorrectly) think our being. So the idea of metaReality is designed to capture a level of truth which cannot be conceptualised in normal realistic, that is dualistic, terms—in this sense beyond reality; but it is not therefore unreal—it is beyond reality in the sense of transcending or surpassing the dichotomies in terms of which reality is normally understood, therefore beyond reality as opposed to illusion or error or belief. If you say the situation that you have is one of peace, then you are saying it is one that transcends, that is surpasses or is beyond the situation of conflict or war, so the question 'who is fighting who?' is irrelevant; just as when you move in science to an understanding of the constitution of material objects in terms of their material, atomic, electronic or quantum structure, the question of whether you can use these electrons to support a computer or a dinner party becomes irrelevant. Truth then is a more basic concept than reality; and metaReality is designed to capture the truth about being, in being, which cannot be conceived in terms of the dualities and polarities customarily associated with realism; and this is not to say that the 'meta' or non-dual aspects of being which are being highlighted are not real; it is rather to say that those aspects and phases of being underpin everything we know and understand and experience as real, but surpass or transcend our understanding of the ordinary world in a realistic way.

6. The Principle of the TINA Formation

This stems from alethic realism because if the world is a certain way, then we must necessarily in our practice act in conformity with the way the world is, irrespective of the nature of our beliefs, at least if we are to be at all successful, that is fulfil our intentionality (as agents), or if the system of beliefs we hold (collectively) is to survive. So what is necessary for a false theory or belief or way of being to be sustained is in fact the tacit presupposition of the reality or truth which underpins it, yet which it denies and may even altogether occlude. Thus the TINA formation is essential to the emancipatory project. In essence it says there is a level of being which is tacitly presupposed in your practice but which you overtly deny and indeed may suppress and altogether screen. Liberation of any sort depends upon there being a better

real possibility than the actually existing state of affairs. If there is a resistance to liberation then we must assume that there is a structure at work which is dominating or occluding that real possibility, so every emancipatory discourse presupposes what I have called a TINA formation. The acronym merely means that 'there is no alternative' to presupposing the truth in practice, whatever you believe or say in theory.

Hence we can move on immediately to the next principles:

7. **The Definition of Liberation as Shedding;** and
8. **The Understanding of Liberation as Dependent on Asymmetry**

or unilateral dependency, which I called the asymmetry of axiology and emancipation. Let me articulate the import of these two principles by isolating the fundamental structure of all emancipatory discourse.

1. There is a primary or essential level, which is good, true, autonomous, etc. and a secondary, emergent or derivative level, which is evil, false, illusory, heteronomous, oppressive, etc.
2. The secondary level, nevertheless, in our world dominates and even occludes (screens or masks) the primary level upon which it nevertheless depends.
3. There is a unilateral (or in other words asymmetrical) relation of dependency between the two levels. The primary level could exist without the secondary level (i.e. the good or true or free could exist without the evil or false or oppressive), but not the other way round (i.e. the evil, false, heteronomous, etc. could not exist without the good, true, autonomous, etc.
4. The process of liberation or emancipation therefore consists in the shedding of the secondary level.
5. This shedding results in the expansion (not contraction), development and flourishing of the content of the primary level in an essentially unbounded way.

Thus when the embodied personality is shed of the heteronomous elements within it, those elements which are blocks or

constraints on its development, those things within it which are inconsistent with its true or essential nature, that is its primary level, defined by the ground-state of that human being, then the embodied personality is free to develop and flourish. The liberated personality is not smaller but larger. Similarly when the heteronomy or unfreedom that exists in parts of the social world or the cosmos generally outside myself are shed then we can all expand more fully than we could have done before the shedding of that constraint, even if that constraint was not within our own embodied personality Thus we begin to see that because we are all interconnected and inseparably intertwined at the level of our ground-states at what I have called the cosmic envelope that truly our freedom, our capacity to act in a non-dual way, to flourish will be constrained if any being is unfree anywhere in the world. Thus we have the poignant truth articulated by Marx's vision of a society in which 'the free development of each would be a condition of the free development of all'. But this is a position which is implicit in any universalising system of ethics or human practice; and is beautifully expressed in the ideal of the Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism. For us, such a vision now is not so much a Utopian norm projected into the future, but something whose reality is immanent, a reality within the world in which we live here and now.

So to become a liberated being or to be a member of an emancipated world all we have to do is shed everything which is inconsistent with our true, most essential nature; a task which is the easier when we realise that everything which is inconsistent with it is sustained by acts and states and phases of our being which flow immediately and directly from our true essential natures. In other words, that a lie only survives in virtue of its dependency on a tacit truth, an act of oppression or cruelty has as its condition of possibility a level or sub-strata of love, compassion, solidarity or trust which it must mobilise all the same for its evil intent.

The contemporary situation is therefore quite an extraordinary one. For we spend a tremendous amount of our creative, loving, knowing activity and energy sustaining a world which is dominated by those opposite qualities of regimentation, hate,

stupidity, etc. and which occupy the focus of our attention. The challenge of the philosophy of metaReality is indeed very simple: take any routinised and oppressive situation, any problem or issue which causes you pain and suffering and underneath it and sustaining it you will find just that intelligence, energy, creativity, love and right-action which could do without the things that you abhor. As you have to be your creative, loving selves anyway to sustain the systems of oppression and hatred, why not just be them **without** those systems? The way we begin to do this will be articulated as we progress through the chapters of this book where we will see what shedding means in practice at the levels of our egos, our minds, our emotions and our physical being as manifest in our objectification or praxis in the world.

When we have no illusions and we are clear in our minds, emotions and physical being then we will perform right-actions and be spontaneously, unconditionally, joyously successful in the world, constrained only by the unfreedoms of those other beings in the world which we will necessarily be forced in our own self-interest to undermine and overthrow.

Following on from this elucidation from the general and necessary logic of emancipatory discourses, we now come to the core principles of the new philosophy of metaReality which I am articulating in the book. These involve the notions of the ground-state, the cosmic envelope, transcendence and in particular transcendental identification in consciousness, and following on from this co-presence. So the next three principles to discuss are:

9. **The Theory of the Ground-state;**
10. **The Theory of the Cosmic Envelope;** and
11. **The Theory of Transcendence**

The ground-state of a being is just its most basic essential level, that level which is ingredient in and a necessary condition for all other levels, states and phases of a being. It is this level, the level of the ground-state of a being which connects it up with the ground-states of all other beings in what I call the cosmic envelope. This level of being, the levels of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope define then the ultimate level of being for our

world, our cosmos and specifically and individually for all the beings in it. The ground-state of a human being will of course share many qualities with the ground-states of all other beings; and it will share many qualities in common with the ground-states of all other human beings; and then it will share some properties in common with specific other human beings, with their own specific differentiations and trajectories; but it will also possess some qualities which uniquely define it as an individual. All of these together will constitute a human being's dharma or essential nature.

The ground-state qualities of human beings in general include energy and intelligence (albeit enfolded as a potential to be elicited and manifested in the appropriate circumstances) and consciousness, creativity, love, the capacity for right-action and therefore for the fulfilment of the being's intentionality, in this case the intentionality of its dharma or its ground-state. The really important point to appreciate is that the consciousness, intentionality and energy of the ground-state is always present and a part of any state of being or act of any embodied personality, anything that it experiences or does in the world. We can never eliminate the consciousness of our ground-state, though we may be, and of course usually are, unaware of it; but that consciousness is there and a necessary condition for every other state of consciousness, including the states of consciousness we experience as embodied personalities.

When we, as embodied personalities, experience the consciousness of our ground-state in a state of rest, then this is customarily known as 'transcendental consciousness'. One of the qualities is that it is 'supramental', that is a level of consciousness which is beyond thought and which manifests between or behind or in virtue of the suspension of thought (mental activity). So transcendental consciousness or consciousness of the ground-state is always there. Similarly the intentionality of the ground-state, that is the intentionality which is intrinsic to our dharma, what you could say the purpose, project, destiny, function of our essential natures are, is always there and manifest in all our active states. Here again this is not to say that the intentionality of our ground-states is always fulfilled. Of course not. It is normally

thwarted and subverted by our other intentionalities present within our embodied personalities, the intentionalities associated with our desires or attachments and aversions or fears, our fixated patterns of belief and habitual modes of behaving in the world. One reason why any intentionality, that is any objective that one has in life which is contrary to or inconsistent with one's real nature, and therefore the intentionality of our ground-states, **cannot** be fulfilled is this: because our desire or goal is inconsistent with our ground-state, then just because the intentionality of our ground-state will always and inexorably be present (as part of a heteronomous ensemble, a TINA or compromise formation), any intentionality or objective inconsistent with it will be split, precisely because of the insistent, abiding presence of the intentionality of our ground-state. Conversely, that intentionality, i.e. the intentionality of our ground-state, cannot for its own part be fulfilled as long as we have any objectives, desires or goals constituting intentionality inconsistent with it, because those objectives or intentionalities will precisely split the intentionality of our ground-state. The only way to avoid a split in our intentionality, that is not to be a chariot torn apart in different directions by horses pulling in opposed ways, is if all our objectives and goals in life, that is all our intentionality is consistent with, even if it is not uniquely defined by, our ground-state. So this is what Krishna meant when he said in the *Bhagavad Gita:* you cannot avoid, you can only delay your destiny, which is to be free or realised. Any other position will split you and is not tenable. Any other position precisely is self-alienation, that alienation which underpins alienation in our activity and at all four planes of social being. In exactly the same way as the consciousness and intentionality of our ground-states is omnipresent though you will normally be unaware of its consciousness, and its intentionality will normally be thwarted, we cannot avoid, we always have, the energy of our ground-state, though of course the energy of our ground-state will normally be dissipated and diffused by all the activities and projects that we pursue in life which are inconsistent with or block or drain the energy flowing from our ground-state. However the totality of these other projects that we perform in life cannot be performed without the energy of the ground-state, and so the

choice is in a way ours, whether we maximise the energy at our disposal by being and doing things only which are consistent with our ground-state or whether we drain or block or interfere with it by utilising that energy in ways which drain and dissipate it.

What I have said about the ubiquity of the consciousness of our ground-state, the insistence of its intentionality and the inexorability of its energy, applies equally to the other more specific qualities of human ground-states, such as creativity, love or our capacity for right-action. We do not have a choice not to be creative; the choice is whether we are creative, in, so to speak, a creative way, that is an unblocked way, or whether our creativity goes into sustaining a form of regimentation or oppression which blunts and blocks our creative energies. Similarly we do not have a choice whether to be loving or not, the choice is really whether we express our love in what is, so to speak, a loving way or whether we express our love—which takes a vast number of different manifest forms, ranging from respect to compassion, from trust to devotion—in an unloving way. For example, as the solidarity we show as a member of a band of robbers, as the respect we tacitly accord to someone whose downfall we plot or rage against. Or in the love, the desire to be one with or like, which we express in fits or states of jealousy. We will go into this in more detail when we discuss the emotions, but what I am arguing here is that every human emotion experienced embodies an element of love which is its driving force, even though in the case of negative emotions such as anger, jealousy, hate or pride, that small iota of love which binds and coheres the emotion is outweighed by the presence of states which oppose it. Similarly the most stupid and inappropriate actions are only actions in as much as they embody a moment or level in which we display our capacity for doing something rightly. Thus suppose a stupid dwarf challenges an intelligent giant to a duel and suffers a predictable fate, he has nevertheless done something rightly insofar as he has succeeded in issuing a challenge, although the challenge is a very stupid one. Just as no intelligence can be manifest in a totally uncreative way and every intelligence depends on an iota of creativity, and just as (or so I have been claiming) every emotion embodies or is sustained by a fraction of love, nothing could be said to be an action at all unless

at some level it was right, that is successfully performed. If you attempt to rob a bank and are arrested at the door, then this is no doubt a flawed action, but we can only call it a flawed action insofar as you have successfully presented yourself at the door of the bank (albeit to be arrested).

Moving on to the theory of the cosmic envelope, we shall see that just as our intentionality cannot be fulfilled unless we are in our ground-states (this is the minimum necessary condition, and being in our ground-states defines a condition of the absence of constraints which are the products of our own intentionality, a state of what I will call negative incompleteness), so our intentionality may not be fulfilled, even if we are in our dharma, if there is heteronomy, alienation or constraint present in any being elsewhere in the universe. And it is this which of course drives us, understanding the inseparability and interconnectivity of all beings in the cosmos, to struggle for the elimination of heteronomy, constraint, unfreedom, that is for the self-realisation of all beings elsewhere. Only when this condition is satisfied can we begin to be in a situation in which we no longer have positive incompleteness and in which our intentionalities will be immediately and spontaneously realised in the universe. The fact that a person may be constrained by the unfreedom or thwarted dharmic intentionality of some other being is not a reason or ground for that person failing to prioritise his or her own self-realisation. For that person will only be in a condition or state to act in an unsplit way so as to aid the realisation of all beings everywhere, if he or she does not turn against themselves. So the order of priority is very clear: unblock yourself and then you will be a maximally efficacious agent in unblocking the constraints on the realisation of beings everywhere and so to the greater fulfilment of your own dharma or potential in life. To put this in a simple graphic way. If you have a dharma to be a musician and you succeed in realising it so that you become a skilled, accomplished musician, you still, in order to fully express it, need an appreciative audience sensitive to and understanding what you are trying to express musically, and this depends on the absence of constraints within society and other beings to the development of their education of their own musical sensibility.

Turning now to the eleventh principle, that involved in the theory of transcendence, I will be relatively brief with this concept now, because I have discussed it in Chapter 1. 'Transcendence' has both a relative and an absolute meaning. In its relative sense, to say that one position or theory or way of being 'transcends' another, is to say that it surpasses it insofar as it is able to resolve problems, inconsistencies and incompletenesses within the one which it transcends and/or opens up new possibilities, insights and developments which were not possible from the transcended standpoint. This is 'transcendence' in a relative sense. However there is also 'transcendence' in an absolute sense, in which we can talk of a person or being transcending or being in a state of transcendental identity or unity with another being, and where the force of transcendence here is that of non-duality or *unity in context*.

There are four main forms of transcendence in this absolute sense:

[i] Transcendence into:- transcendental retreat;
[ii] Transcendence onto:- transcendental identification;
[iii] Transcendence on or at:- transcendental agency; and
[iv] Transcendence with:- transcendental teamwork.

Transcendence into involves a state of consciousness in which one gradually loses the sense of objectivity, externality, of things outside oneself and retreats into one's own subjectivity until nothing else but oneself exists. This then is a state of consciousness of complete self-absorption or self-unity, variously characterised as a state of 'emptiness' and 'suchness', but whatever it is, it is certainly an extreme, rich state, a state of experience of consciousness, which may be most accurately captured by concepts such as '*sat*', '*chit*', '*anand*', bliss-consciousness of being. Such states are beyond thought but they are extremely rich in content. In touching this self-unity in moments of restful consciousness, one accesses the rest consciousness of one's ground-state, that is what is customarily called 'transcendental consciousness'. What is happening here in accessing the consciousness of one's ground-state is that one's consciousness, that is the consciousness of one's embodied personality, touches, accesses, becomes one with the

restful consciousness of one's ground-state. That consciousness is however present as a silent condition of all the excited, non-restful states of one's being and activity, all the states of consciousness of one's embodied personality; and we shall see later how the transcendental consciousness of the ground-state can be held in unity with the active consciousness of one's embodied personality. This kind of transcendence, transcendence into one's self, is very important in understanding how we can become aware of our states of consciousness and use one's consciousness to understand and heal our rifts in being. On this, more in a moment.

The second form of transcendence is transcendence outwards, rather than inwards, in which one loses one's sense of one's own subjectivity in going completely into something outside oneself, into objectivity. What happens here is transcendental identification in consciousness, that is the equation of the consciousness of our embodied personality in the explicit or implicit consciousness of some other being. In principle one can go into any being at all. But it is perhaps most customarily invoked in acts of contemplation, worship, etc. in which one loses oneself in awe of the beauty of a mountain or some music or a picture or a scene. However one need not go to such reified contexts to understand this at work. Whenever you hear me you are immediately in transcendental identification with my words. You cannot listen and think. If you are listening to me you are not thinking. If you are thinking you are not listening. If you are looking and reading the newspaper, you are not thinking: the newspaper or the words in the newspaper are not the objects of your consciousness, they are your consciousness in the sense that your consciousness is at one with them. Similarly if you are watching a play on television and are watching and absorbed by the play, you are in a non-dual state. You are not thinking, you are not doing anything else, you are just watching and immediately one with the play; the play is not an object of your consciousness, your consciousness is at one with the play. The moment you start thinking you have lost the play, the moment you turn to talk to your friend or concentrate on eating your dinner in front of the television screen then you have to make up the gaps in the story—'oh what happened? I missed that.' If your mind wanders while you are

reading something, that is if you are thinking and not reading, then you have to read it again, and you will have to read it again and again and again until you just read it. So it has been said before that if you think you are meditating, you are not meditating. This corresponds if you like to my first paradigm of transcendental unity. What I am doing is just drawing out the implications of the concept of transcendental unity for our acts of unification and identification with aspects of being outside ourselves, without which we could not have any understanding, perception, communication, or interaction with the world. So I say if you are listening, you are not thinking; if you are thinking you are not listening, if you are looking, you are not reading; if you are reading you are not looking; everything we do has to have a non-dual aspect to it and when we lose the non-duality, the level of non-duality we need, then we have to go back again. 'What did he say?' (I mean the words)—or at another level 'what did he mean?' Because it's not just a question of when we are perceiving the world, we are perceiving it non-dualistically or we are not perceiving it at all. It is also the case that we understand it immediately, intuitively and directly, without mediation of physical signals or thought. This understanding is in fact a truly revolutionary position in terms of normal philosophical conceptions of 'mind and body' or 'the mind–body problem' or consciousness, which is always conceived around an opposition, always involves a mediation. In fact it is not difficult to see that anything which has to be interpreted by something else for a meaning to be understood will always itself require interpretation, so no meaning could ever be understood unless at some point it was understood immediately. But surely you might say you have to know the meaning in the first place, and that you have to be taught. No. Immediately the baby cries it experiences want and the mother immediately knows it. At no point in our life, at no level in any complex interaction with the world outside ourselves do we not perceive, understand immediately, non-dualistically.

If you take these two paradigms of transcendental retreat into oneself and transcendental absorption into another, then we can begin to understand some extraordinary aspects of the nature of our consciousness. Just consider attention or awareness. Just

be aware of something, it may be your breath, it may be the profile of your thumb, it may be the whirring of a fan. Just be aware. Most people find this exercise difficult to do. But people find it very easy to watch an exciting film or to read a gripping story. Taken in the context of our natural enjoyable life (or in the context of the suffering and pain that we have) we are all observant agents, in non-dual transcendental consciousness. Removed from artificial experiments it is something we all immediately and routinely do. However it is worth just dwelling on the dynamics of this paradigm for a bit, this paradigm of attending or observing, non-dualistically, without thought, and hence without judgement of any sort. Thus observe your own state of consciousness. Suppose your state of consciousness is one of boredom or irritation. Then observe your state of consciousness, in your observing your state of consciousness you will not be bored or irritated you will be just observing, focusing on your boredom or irritation until you are not being bored or irritated, just observing. When you are just observing you are no longer bored or irritated. At the next level you can then observe your observing consciousness, and ultimately retreating ever inward you will find this wonderful plenitude or abundance of emptiness, this suchness of the void, and in the meantime you will experience the quality of love. As you retreat from your boredom or irritation and just observe you will begin to love the consciousness which is your being; and then going ever deeper into successive levels of depth of your consciousness through love you will lose yourself in a state of rich joy in which you are no longer yourself, you are just emptiness or suchness or being or whatever you want to call it. Now the absolutely extraordinary thing is that exactly the same mechanism or dialectic works when you go into an object outside yourself. You may find yourself angry with or jealous of another person. Distancing yourself from your anger, this is the reflexive retreat, so that you are now in a state without judgement, just observe that person or being (let us call him John, or if you want, an artefact, your computer or car). Observe without anger or jealousy, fear or boredom that which you are going into. If you are experiencing fear or anger, then you are not going into it. Going into something just observing, you become one just as you are

reading my words, in reading my words you are immediately one with my words, so in going into John or your computer or car you are immediately one with them. In this non-dualistic state of consciousness, you will have no judgement. And just observing you will as you continue to observe experience the extraordinary phenomenon of love. It is impossible to observe something without loving it. This is of course why we normally observe what we already love. Now if there is something that you do not love, you will find another feature of consciousness. That observing it you will understand it, you will become it and find it, that which you did not love, within yourself. Understanding it, becoming one with it, you will now from this subjective standpoint experience the phenomenon of love. Going ever more deeply into the object outside yourself whether it be John or your computer or your car, you will pass through understanding to the state of emptiness, or suchness, you will find in that thing the 'Buddha-nature', that same thing which you found when you went into yourself, that same state whether you want to describe it as the richest or the poorest (in the sense of emptiness) state in the world. And when you touch that level within yourself or within another being you will see that in your consciousness that level is characterised by this same characteristic of what we could call light or being at the cosmic envelope. These exercises here will be useful to perform, because our acts of non-dual or transcendental identification with beings normally stop at levels, aspects or phases of their being which are far removed from that inner cord of emptiness or suchness which constitutes everything that exists in the cosmos. And when we transcendentally identify with a plane on the television or understanding a report of a football match in the newspaper, we normally stop far short of that identification with an object which takes us into love consciousness of it. But the more you go into an object the deeper and more intensively you can attend, the more you will love it and the more passing through love you will just experience the joy or bliss of its own being in consciousness.

Turning now to the third paradigm of transcendence, that is the paradigm of transcendence on, in or at or what I will call transcendental agency, here again we are faced with an

extraordinary but very familiar phenomenon. Transcendental agency consists in a complete unity or oneness with an activity. Classically, philosophers have had a paradigm of how we do things. We may have a desire or a wish or an urge, then we think about how to fulfil it, then in some way we fulfil it as a result of our thought about how to fulfil it. In other words action falls into a mediated or means-ends or instrumental paradigm. And action is something which depends upon prior thought. This is a completely false view of action. It is easy to see that if we think about doing something, say cooking a meal for our friends, we may indeed be involved in quite a long chain of calculation and ratiocination, such as how many potatoes we need and at which shop to buy them and whether we have the right number of utensils or plates or chairs, etc., etc. At some point, however, we will just have to begin cooking it. And this we will just have to do. And consider something even more basic. Taking up my pen to write. I may consider how to take it up, how I should hold my pen, but at some point I have to just pick it up and start writing. In other words action depends upon unthought action. Such action may of course be a product of a prior process of learning. For those of us who cannot drive, there is nothing spontaneous about getting into the car and turning the wheels correctly in order to reverse it. No, we have to think about it. But when you know how to drive you just do it. Just as when we know how to speak English, we just speak. Actually we don't even think about thinking. Thought just happens. Try thinking about a thought. It's impossible. You just think. Therefore you just think. You just feel. You just speak. You just act (and these thoughts, feelings and words are also actions themselves). Again we can say that if you are thinking, you are not doing, and if you are doing, you are not thinking. So in all action there must be a level or moment of non-dual action for there to be any action at all. Naturally, we may be cooking or talking spontaneously and also be doing something else. This merely shows our capacity to act in a holistic totalising way. Similarly in doing one thing we may be doing several other things in the accordion-like spanning out of action. But when you stop to think or to talk, at that moment you are not acting. And when you are acting, you are not also thinking, least of all

thinking about how you are acting. Moreover, action like identity needs to be understood as being rich, a differentiated holistic complex totality, in a way self-structuring and even self-developing. Emptiness or suchness too have to be understood in this rich differentiated developing way.

At an intuitive level, much of this makes obvious sense to us. We all know that it is precisely at the moment when you start thinking about what you are doing when you are doing something you normally do spontaneously and easily, such as walking down stairs or lifting a glass, that you may slip or shake. We are all familiar with this. We all know that insofar as thinking comes into acting at all, we act first, then think later. Again we all intuitively understand the value of the advice that Krishna gave to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* to focus single-pointedly in the activity, not its result or consequence. Again this is part of our common sense. We all know that when a football striker receives the ball if he attends to the consequence of his kick or header or whatever, namely scoring a goal or securing his side a victory or reaching a tally for a certain amount of goals in a season, or being selected to play for a team, that is precisely when he will miss. The extraordinary thing about this is that strikers miss so many easy goals. On the other hand if a goalkeeper makes a mistake he is pilloried for it. The reason for this asymmetry is this: when a keeper saves a shot, he has to do it spontaneously, intuitively, without thought, as a reflex action to a situation for which in its specificity he was unprepared. At the same time what is also extraordinary is the number of absolutely brilliant spontaneous goals scored by strikers and others on a football field, when they receive the ball unexpectedly, without thinking they will perform an amazing overhead kick or strike an absolutely scorching shot of the sort which they have very rarely been able to do in practice. The perfect football striker is therefore someone who not only has all the skills and is capable of acting instantaneously, spontaneously, when presented with a momentary opportunity, but one who is able to 'keep his cool' when faced with a simple angle from ten or fifteen yards out with only the goalkeeper to beat and all the time in the world. Similarly the perfect goalkeeper is the one who can not just bring out a miraculous save, but close down a hole in his

defence which he suddenly sees before him when he has all the time in the world to dwell on the consequences of making a mistake or, on the contrary, saving his side. These examples could be illustrated endlessly not only from other sports but all walks of life.

One consequence of this is that in order to be able to perform any action at all, we must be able to perform some action rightly and in a spontaneous, effortless, unmediated way.[11] To conclude we can either act or think but not both. We can either act or feel (negatively) resentment, greed, desire (which is not the same as love) but not both. One feature of action, however, differentiates the transcendental unity we find in action from the transcendental unities of identification we have found in the consciousness we have found in the first two paradigms. Thus the unity we find in consciousness (at least in paradigm two) identifies or equates us with another being, a being outside our physically embodied personality, or, at least outside the physical boundaries of our embodied personality. However, the unity we find in our action is always within the confines and context of our

[11] The question of effortlessness is an interesting one. When we are doing something in our dharma and when we have 'mastered' our dharma, then we are doing it with minimum effort. However the process of mastering one's dharma, acquiring the skills in which your bundle of true excellences lies will normally be an arduous one. Similarly the execution of those skills, the perfection of the act may presuppose arduous preparatory, contextualising, backgrounding and formative work. When the creative insight into the nature of gravity occurred to Newton, it slipped in to his consciousness, in the space between thoughts, effortlessly; but he had not only mastered his dharma, his physico-mathematical excellences, but thoroughly immersed himself in the empirical protocols and existing knowledges of the field of problems to which the concept of gravity was the answer and solution. Not only this but the relative effortlessness of dharmic action must also be qualified by an understanding of the condition of our physical constitution. It does not matter how brilliant a poet or musician might be, if they have been forced to stand without sleep for two weeks, they will not be able to perform because the initial or boundary conditions for the performance of their dharmic act are not satisfied. A corpse cannot perform his dharma in the world of physical embodiment. This applies very generally to questions of stress including stress at the emotional and mental as well as physical levels.

physical embodiment.[12] Thus the only way we can ever act is by acting ourselves, from ourselves, from the position and point of our agency. This is a strikingly obvious point when you consider it. What it entails is a thesis we will come to slightly later, namely the thesis of the primacy or priority of subject- or self-referentiality. What this means, however, is very important. Because understanding that we can only act ourselves has very important practical and ethical implications. For a start if you think you can act through someone else then your intentionality is going to be split, i.e. half of it will depend on their intentionality. You have abdicated responsibility for your own action.[13] At an ethical level, it means that we must reconceptualise our understanding of what it is for us to conceive ourselves as being agents of social emancipation or human liberation. We cannot force a person to be free. Freedom to, unlike freedom from, cannot be imposed from without. Understanding this point deeply enough takes you into the understanding that you basically cannot even teach anyone anything else (or as we shall see in the next chapter, anything that they did not, in an important way, already know). More on this later.

Turning to the fourth paradigm of transcendence with, what we might call transcendental teamwork or holistic transcendental unity in action. We are all aware of the amazing acts of synchronicity required for musicians to perform effectively together in a concert; we are all amazed at the way in which two people who know each other well will anticipate each other's moves and gestures. But consider also these. How extraordinary it is that in a crowded city like Kolkata, where there are millions of people bustling streets that can hardly accommodate them, that they never crash into or even bump into each other. What explains this remarkable phenomenon. Any statistical modelling would show the probability of crashes and severe bumps to be extremely high, so high that one could hardly take a journey of as little as a hundred

[12] This will be qualified later when we come to talk about action at the mental and emotional levels as actions in their own sui generis right.

[13] None of this means that we cannot, and must always, act in a socialised, collective, co-operative, mutually dependent way.

yards without breaking a limb or crashing into somebody. What is happening on the streets of Kolkata is in fact an amazing holistic performance, in which the citizens of and indeed strangers to that city successfully act as one, or a totality so as to avoid bumping into each other. Then there are better studied phenomena such as turn-taking in conversations. How extraordinary that we so seldom speak across each other at the same time. More extraordinary is the way at which in a seminar or in a group a question will be asked by one member, precisely as the tacit spokesperson for the group, when that question needs to be asked. So much so that if there is a particular person with an axe to grind and the time comes in the seminar or workshop for him to grind his axe and he has just before that excused himself (in search of a cup of coffee or whatever), someone else will ask his question for him. Again you can experiment with this for yourself.

What is crucial then is that transcendence involves centrally the following phenomena:

Identity, identification and unity in a particular context—which is why it is such an important concept for a philosophy of non-duality. For philosophies of duality are philosophies of non-identity, separateness and opposition, including oppositional conflict. Insofar as we are essaying in this chapter a view of the way in which non-alienated being and activity (that is non-split or non-dual being and activity) underpins, sustains and is the unilateral condition or possibility of dual, split and alienated being and activity, transcendence also involves a re-evaluation of spontaneity and unconditionality. Transcendental acts, including acts of identification in consciousness, are spontaneous and unconditional, they do not involve thought and they do not carry a price. Understanding that such acts underpin all the systems and forms of activity in our contemporary societies, including the most complex forms of symbolic, including manipulative, reasoning and financial or monetary transactions, constitutes a standing indictment of a system dominated by the categories of formal logic, law, money and so forth.

We now move more specifically from thematising transcendence to thematising the implications of the second paradigm in particular, that is

11*. The Theory of Transcendental Identification in Consciousness

The fact that we can transcendentally identify with anything, and in principle everything in consciousness, that is with all being in consciousness, means that all being must be implicitly conscious. For what we have done in our consciousness, in going into an oak tree, a fog, or a train, is to equate, that is to become one with that object in our consciousness. Insofar as we have equated, identified, 'oned' with that being in consciousness then what we are one with must be consciousness also; and therefore if it is not, as in the case of an oak tree, a fog, or a train, explicitly conscious, then in an important sense it must be implicitly so.[14]

So how are we to make sense of the implicitly conscious nature of all being? What we have to say is that all being, in virtue of its being part of one universe, which even considered materially we believe emerged from a single spark, lightening flash or big bang (or perhaps some originating primordial sound or stirring in the void), must be bound together or share the properties of every part of it in common in virtue of the unity inscribed in the universe's beginning and/or in its interconnectedness as a whole. Thus there was organic and animate life or vitality **implicit** in the formation of the first atom of helium, aeons before carbon; and implicit there too was consciousness. So consciousness is enfolded within all being and in becoming one with any being which is not explicitly conscious, we become one with the latent, implicit or enfolded consciousness within it, a potentiality which it may not in any material sense experience for itself. Thus the understanding of matter and being as enfolded consciousness

[14] Some people may object to the use of artefacts to illustrate this point. In which case they might like to substitute for the fog and the train such objects as mountains and cranes. However there are very good reasons for arguing that artefacts are implicitly conscious too. For in the first place they are the objects of human intentionality and in the second place people very naturally attribute conscious qualities to objects they are in relation or aversion to. Thus they will name their car and treat it as if it had a personality; or condemn a city for its fog or rain.

is quite consistent with the understanding of consciousness (and organic or animate life) as a historically and diachronically emergent power of consciousness.

However there is an asymmetry between the two terms in this 'equivalence' of this 'materialism' and 'idealism'. For we cannot identify consciousness in matter, at least in a simple or immediate form, in a way which we identify matter in consciousness, therefore we have to see consciousness as enfolded within all being in the way in which matter is not. For once consciousness is established as an emergent power of materially embodied things, such as human beings, there is no way we can reduce our powers and the products of consciousness, such as thoughts and ideational phenomena generally to matter. And then they take on an emergent life of their own. What I say to you, the particular words I utter and their meaning is consistent with all the laws of matter and therefore the specific thing that I say to you now and my specific meaning here cannot be derived from those laws. All human agency involves the capacity for mind to put matter in motion. Thus if I ask the person sitting next to me at dinner to pass the salt, my speech action is a causally efficacious condition for a material change in the world. And in no way can my speech action be read or determined from some set of material conditions. So consciousness is enfolded in all being (and I have already suggested there is supramental consciousness as well as mental consciousness) but matter is not enfolded within all consciousness. This means that there is an inverse chain or synchronic order of ontological priority in the increasing determinacy with which consciousness enfolds itself in matter; and makes matter a synchronically emergent or derivative power of consciousness, while at the same time allowing that consciousness can be diachronically emergent from matter. So being involves two acts, a notional descent of consciousness (as far as we know, synchronic, that is outside time and space) and a non-notional but actual ascent (what we can call a re-ascent from being to consciousness) and (who knows?) beyond.

This leads us now into perhaps the single most important principle we have to discuss. For the capacity for consciousness, our consciousness to achieve transcendental identification with

anything in the world, meaning that anything in the world can be equated with consciousness in the consciousness of some being, establishes

12. The Principle of Transcendental Identification in My Consciousness

This means that every object in the world must be capable of becoming one with me in my consciousness, that implicitly I have the capacity for transcendental identification with all that exists. This takes us on then to the very important principle

13. The Principle of Co-presence

This means that just as consciousness was implicitly enfolded in all being, all beings are implicitly enfolded within my consciousness and therefore within my being. This is a truly extraordinary result. It will be remembered that the western philosopher Kant was inspired by two things above all:

'the starry heavens above me' and 'the moral law within me'.

The theory of co-presence says yes the starry heavens are above me, but they are also within me, enfolded within me, like everything else in the universe. I contain the totality. But on this theory externality does not collapse. For just as the whole world is enfolded within me, I am enfolded within the whole world, more particularly within every object in the world.

Let me just elaborate some of the extraordinary consequences of the theory of co-presence.

(a) First it explains the phenomenon of karma. For the hurt that I do to you, I implicitly carry or contain within me; and that hurt, which was the product of my intentionality and so has been activated within me, is something which I must clear, release or discharge in order to be free. On this conception, then, karma is not something external, but a self doing, the storing up of elements of heteronomy which block or thwart our freedom and split and/or fulfil our intentionality. And so like anything else, which is heteronomous, that is inconsistent with our ground-states, our karma, our desires and aversions is something that must be shed for us to be free.

(b) The theory of co-presence allows us also to see the necessity for a commitment to a eudaimonistic society and more generally to the project and state of universal self-realisation. For even when I have shed my own heteronomy, let go of my ego, my attachments and aversions, and my karma, that is I am free of heteronomy which is the product of my own intentionality, because every other being is enfolded within me, I cannot be free so long as any other being in the universe is unfree, either in virtue of heteronomy or attachments or aversions or karma stemming from its own split or karma. That is to say I cannot be positively complete or fulfilled until every other being in the universe is free of heteronomy stemming from its own intentionality. I must therefore act in such a way as to release their unfreedom, which I experience, since they are enfolded within me, so that their unfreedom is part of my own.

(c) Not only does the theory of co-presence explain phenomena such as karma and why we must be committed to universal self-realisation, it shows the mechanism in which universal self-realisation must and will occur. This is the mechanism of what might be called 'the universal silent revolution'. Let us see how it works. When I am in my ground-state, then what I do will be maximally coherent and efficacious in an overt way in the world. This is because being in my ground-state I will be without blocks or constraints on the fulfilment of my intentionality within my self and at the same time in tune and attuned with the ground-states of all other beings situated on the cosmic envelope, that is attuned to responses, and all other beings in the cosmos will be similarly attuned or responsive to me. But the inwards or esoteric effect is even more striking and dynamic. In performing an act (in principle any act) I will set up an echo to all beings who are in the same or similar situation to me. For my act will immediately resonate with all those beings enfolded within me who are in the same or similar situation to me; and in the same way and/or I will echo within them as I am enfolded within their being. In this way in an act of my being I immediately affect that aspect of the totality of beings which are in the same or similar situation to me and they echo my act. Look at it from an external point of view—we can see this in terms of reciprocity. It is as if I have set up a

vibration by my act which affects all other beings in the universe who are attuned to (attracted to or like) me. Whether these beings that I have 'awakened' or 'affected' or 'touched' in my act actually respond to the call of my echo, that is in the same way as me, will of course depend upon the particularities of their own situation (what resistances and other constraints, karma, etc. they also contain or possess). But there is another level of effect here too for insofar as my act has come from my ground-state, then I will exert a pull on all those beings in the same situation towards their ground-states; and even if my act is not echoed within the totality of their being, they may still respond to the direction of my call, that is, they may dive to their ground-states, touching the space, the deep sub-stratum behind and beyond the level of thought from which created unconditional spontaneous, loving right-acts are performed. And insofar as my act has any positive response, that positive response in turn will generate an infinite number of tendentially dialectically similar responses in the cosmos similar to those beings who have responded to my act.

This in outline is the dynamics by which not just the universal silent revolution but, as I will show, all revolutions do actually occur. Let me just illustrate this by a biological example, something akin to what has been called the 'butterfly effect'. In the 1930s, blackbirds (notoriously stupid birds) had been cohabiting with milk bottles in England without accessing their secret. Then one day in 1936 one blackbird by accident tapped and cracked a milk bottle top. 'Eureka', milk. Within a few days dozens of blackbirds had cracked it too. Within a mondi the whole species knew it. There is no possible physical mechanism by which this could have been created. Again we are all familiar with the principles of the philosophy I am proposing in our everyday life. It is commonplace that it is much easier for our children to operate computers than our parents.

(d) The fourth consequence or implication of the theory of co-presence involves what, I called in *Reflections on Meta-Reality*, the **theory of reciprocity**. Actually this principle is underpinned by the principle of co-presence, which so to speak ontologically entails it.

But, equally, we could view it as an intermediate position in the movement which takes us from (11*), the theory of transcendental identification in consciousness, to (12), the theory of transcendental identification in my consciousness, entailing (13), the theory of co-presence.

So that we could have elaborated (11), the theory of transcendence as entailing: first,

> **(A) the theory of transcendental identification in consciousness**
> **(B) the theory of reciprocity**; and finally
> **(C) the theory of co-presence** (via the theory of transcendental identification in my consciousness [i.e. 13)].

Let me explain this. The theory of transcendental identification in consciousness (11*) shows how all being, including the most brute material being, has consciousness enfolded within it; so that consciousness is a synchronically implicate or enfolded power of matter. This means, as we have seen, that all being is implicitly conscious.

But something else follows immediately from our capacity to transcendentally identify in consciousness with other beings in the world, including especially and necessarily human beings but not only human beings. This is that in that moment in which we identify transcendentally with some other being we share other aspects of our being, besides our consciousness, with that being. So in transcendentally identifying with a play on the television we experience the qualities of suspense, fear, laughter, etc. In feeling sympathy with an animate being in pain, we share or in some way experience ourselves, empathise with, its pain. The more sensitive we are, the more we are in transcendental identification with that being, the more we will experience its pain in ourselves. This motivates the principle of reciprocity, because when I am in transcendental identity with an object I communicate aspects of my activity and not just my consciousness, and it communicates aspects of its being and activity and not just its consciousness back to me. Or rather we could say that when I am in transcendental identity with an object I communicate those aspects of my

consciousness which are my thoughts, feelings and (physical) activities and sensations to it.

The basis of this lies in co-presence. The more awakened I am to a quality, being or phenomenon in the world, the more I will be aware of its experience, happenings to or by it (in a relationship of reciprocity), and the easier it will be for me to be in transcendental identification with it. Thus most people find it very easy to identify or feel in a relationship of resonance with a partner, or members of their family or friends, or members of the same gender, generation, occupational group, ethnic community, etc.; and easier to identify with human beings than animals (though this is not always the case); and easier to identify with the higher animals than inanimate objects like rocks and stones. At the same time a loving gardener will find it easier to be aware of, respond or resonate to the quality of a rose; and we can suppose that such a gardener, endowed with what we may call 'an awakened rose-quality-consciousness', will find it easier to awaken a (implicit and/or explicit) reciprocal response within the rose. Ultimately, in the fully developed and awakened experience of the consciousness of our ground-states, we would be able to apprehend the qualities and beings of everything else in the world; so that we would be fully awake to every aspect of every other being including:

[a] its manifestation of any quality, etc.;
[b] the implicit consciousness of that manifest quality, etc.; and
[c] the potentialities and possibilities, including of future evolutionary development, implicit in that manifestation of that quality.

At the same time, insofar as we are not fully awakened to the implicit totality enfolded within our ground-states, then we need to differentiate the cases:

1. Where a quality or a happening to a thing or being can be immediately experienced, even in the physical absence of that thing (in the way in which a mother may know when her child is in pain, even though he is at school).

2. Where the quality or event of a being is in a state of readiness to be awakened in experience, whether or not it does so depending upon the play of forces within the conscious field of the being.
3. Where a quality or thing represents a tendency on the threshold of being awakened or sensitised for the being concerned.
4. Where the thing or quality of the being is buried some way below the threshold of being awakened and is subject only to the play of forces at the level of implicit consciousness (as in case [b]).
5. Where the quality or thing could only be awakened after a process of evolution in which the being concerned evolved through one or more thresholds of development.

When it comes to analysing the tendential effect, ranging from immediate and automatic resonance, say in the case of a parent/child dyad, to the case in which you may be able to feel some kind of sympathy for a flower whose stalk has been bent, then one can make use of the kind of deep differentiated structural analysis of tendencies which I have essayed elsewhere[15] in which tendencies are qualified in terms of their readiness to be exercised, and in terms of the satisfaction of:

> intrinsic and/or extrinsic conditions;
> stimulating and/or releasing conditions; and
> enabling or affording and/or selecting or determinant conditions.

At the deepest level, involving several layers, and potentially infinite number of levels, of strata of implicit consciousness, recursively enfolded within the ground-state of a thing, then ultimately, we can say that under conditions of generalised co-presence, any ground-state will experience or resonate or be awake to any happening in any other ground-state which sustains some other being or object in the cosmos. So all ground-states would be in generalised synchronicity.

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[15] *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. Verso, London and New York, 1993, p. 78n.

Thus the truth of the idea that when I smile at a rose, the rose smiles back at me, lies in the fact that implicit within the rose is a consciousness which resonates or is attuned to the development of the rose-quality-consciousness within me, since I am enfolded within the rose. But the rose is equally enfolded within me, so that my rose-quality-consciousness recognises the resonance within the rose of my appreciation of it, and reciprocally smiles back to me. So, in a way, the me in the rose smiles back through the rose in me, at me. This can be made plausible in terms of our social experience in terms of the way in which, normally, if you smile in a non-threatening way at someone then probably they will smile back at you. If they don't smile back at you then there is some kind of failure in reciprocity, which may necessitate an enhanced level of transcendental identification. Of course your smiling at them may be in an effort to cheer them up, when they are in pain or depressed or whatever; and whether or not this is a good way of doing it will depend on your sensitivity to the person, context and your relationship to the person and context in question and your relationship to them. I do not wish to make too much of this point empirically, because understood in terms of the theory of co-presence the effect is always there anyway and when we understand that the nature of the systems in which we act and have our being are open systems we can see that anything we do will have, of necessity, a tendential effect. If you lend an impoverished person some money, then this act will not necessarily remedy their impoverishment, but *ceteris paribus* it will make them less impoverished than they were.[16]

Let me briefly list the other remaining principles we are concerned with here:

14. The Principle of the Primacy of Self-referentiality

This involves a critique of formal, substitutionist, exploitative, manipulative ways of acting, which I will not adumbrate here.

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[16] Of course this is not in any way to say that lending money is the best remedy for some specific situation of impoverishment; the point that I am making is one about the nature of any action in an open system.

15. The Principle of Re-enchanting Reality

Here we see the significance of the breakdown of the dualities and dichotomies associated with the movement (which will be discussed in more detail later in the book) towards with modernity. What happened in the development of the ideologies and discourses of modernity were a series of fundamental distinctions or dichotomies:

(a) a distinction between the sacred and the profane;
(b) a distinction between meaning and being;
(c) a distinction between fact and value.

There were others, of course, too. When we see that non-dual being and activity underpins all forms of being and activity, then we can see that it is impossible to have a naïve distinction between the sacred and the profane, for here it is important to distinguish two things that I am saying:

(*i*) No communication or action would be possible without non-dual communication (or transcendental identification) and action (or transcendental agency)—these are features of everyday life, whether or not these features are consistent or inconsistent with our ground-state qualities.
(*ii*) Our ground-state qualities are necessary conditions for all our other states of being, including our states of consciousness. Thus we have non-duality everywhere as a necessary condition of doing anything at all, even the most heinous, stupid and regimented, repressive things; but all these stupidities, etc. are only sustained by the ground-state energy, intelligence, creativity, love, etc.

So non-duality comes into the argument in two ways. Now whatever is regarded as being the opposite of the profane, and whatever we might regard as sacred, these will surely need to be explicated in terms of such qualities as creativity, love, etc. In the next two volumes of this study when I come to a critical understanding of the phenomena of religiosity and religions, we can make this point much sharper. Let it be said that whether our emphasis is on the content-specific nature of the 'spiritual', e.g.

creativity, love or its formal character (e.g. transcendence, non-duality), then the profane cannot exist for a moment without it; in the sense both that it depends (causally, energetically) on it, and in the sense that it can only exist or occur in virtue of non-dual, transcendental, spontaneous, intuitive, direct communication and action. This involves the sense in which non-dual states and phases of being and activity are necessary constituents for any being or activity at all, the sense in which in even the most horrendous action to be an action has to embody a moment which is spontaneously right—e.g. pressing the button for a bomb to go off has to be done correctly.

The meaningful nature of being is restored immediately by the collapse of the semiotic triangle entailed by the collapse of subject–object duality. Being is immediately meaningful, it tells us something, we can learn from it. In the same way in our own being and activity, we immediately express meaning. How could it be otherwise? How could we ever consider learning anything from anything else? Perhaps it might be supposed that meaning is something which is imputed to being as an additional extra; but the absurdity of this position is clear. For nothing happens in the social world at all without the constitutively meaningful character of acts, perceptions and so on. Nor could we ever learn anything at all unless we immediately perceived meaning. When we know how to read the sky, we immediately perceive the meaning of the ominous clouds; when we know how to read the content revealed by the electron microscope then we see the genetic structure of chlorophyll.

Similarly the fact-value distinction immediately collapses. We have already seen how the world of facts is only constituted by the value or norm of truth. So if a value is required for facts, there is no ground for that distinction between facts and values in the first place. All our action, including our perception of the world, depends upon our understanding particular factual aspects of reality as being right or wrong, being there to be sustained and supported or transformed and undermined; or left alone. If we see a cat writhing in the street in agony we immediately experience this situation as bad and spontaneously seek in some way (*ceteris paribus*) to remedy it. Passing by a field on a sunny morning we

see some rabbits playing in the field. We leave them alone, we don't have to intervene in any way to spoil their enjoyment, their bliss. But our inaction is still an action, the action of letting be, predicated on a positive evaluation of the enjoyment of those creatures.

The theory of reciprocity encourages us to see that we equate or identify with a being's properties and activities and that we routinely communicate in this identifying or unifying way. But it takes us into the territory of principles of resonance and attunement generally. We will be exploring some of these principles in Chapters 3 and 4 of this book. But what we have here is in a way an overt form of communication of qualities, the external form or effect of what happens with the internal implicate enfolding established by the phenomena of co-presence. This takes us immediately into articulation of some of the principles of a re-enchanted reality. This again we will explore in more detail later in the book.

We have already seen how reality becomes meaningful and evaluative and in the senses that I have elaborated spiritual, once we understand the significance of the theories of the ground-state, the cosmic envelope and transcendence. It is now a very short step from seeing that our existing conception of the constituents of our embodied personality is woefully inadequate. For in our social interaction we directly communicate mind-to-mind. We immediately understand each other without any physical mediation; our understanding (like our mental acts, our thoughts) is spontaneous, that ideas and consciousness more generally are irreducible to any action at all, something which did not embody intentionality would not be an action of a human being, but at best a piece of behaviour, or an accident that happened to it, rather than something that it did—e.g. slipping on ice, rather than walking across the road; and finally we can appreciate the tremendous creative (including destructively creative) power of mind.

For the world in which we live and the world that we have created is truly a world of ideas, including ideas charged with feelings or emotions and including embodied ideas. Most philosophers would notice (though many would still deny) the physical embodiment of ideas in machines, technologies, etc. But of

course we are all subject to non-embodied ideas, such as the panic and fear that was experienced in a pretty global way following the events of 11 September 2001. This fear may have manifested in embodied action, but it existed as a reality, sui generis quite independently of any embodiment, and for the most it was not embodied, it was just experienced as fear, bordering on a panic. But then of course there are ideas pure and simple. For example the theory that what happens when a political action is taken is determined by the deliberations of the politicians—the personalist, liberal, individualistic view, the idea for example to send 'the troops in'—is a deliberated response to a situation. This is the liberal personalist ideology. Then there is the alternative ideology, most characteristically associated with Marxism, that the politician will take the action that he does in relation to the economic circumstances (for example the circumstances of the class he represents, or the national bourgeoisie for which he stands, etc.). Then 'sending the troops in' will be understood or conceptualised as a response to the need to combat an economic depression, war or fighting being good for business. I am not supporting either of these views; merely pointing out they are schemes, ideologies, that is ideational or mental thought forms in terms of which we experience and view events that happen in the world. And which of these two competing interpretations you accept will enormously influence your feelings and your physical actions.

So we are now moving towards a view of seeing mind as having enormous and irreducible efficacy of its own, direct and enormous causality. In exactly the same way, our feelings, such as of exhilaration within a nation at the success of its team in a popular support or grief at the death of a beloved actress or popstar, etc. are sui generis qualities which directly affect our feelings, indirectly feed back up to our ideas or interpretative systems, and indirectly feed down into our actions. Thus the widespread grief at Princess Diana's death was palpable and almost tangible.[17] All this suggests that we have to understand four-planar social being

[17] It is absurd to suppose that you can only sense or experience a person's physical state. This is completely wrong. For you immediately sense, apprehend, feel

as being constituted in each of its four dimensions in a minimally triple-layered way. The first and obvious layer is the physical one. The second layer being the emotional (or vital) one, the third being the ideational or mental level. Of course if we regard mind as being only one form of manifestation of consciousness and do not equate the two, so that just as we talk of unconscious and subconscious (and also pre-conscious) elements of our personality and being, then we can talk about a supramental level, that is aspects of consciousness which are not mediated by thought at all.[18] Because of the indeterminate nature (at this stage of the argument) as to how we should conceptualise these levels of consciousness that are not manifest in feeling, mind or vitality or physical action) I will merely refer to a necessity to work towards a conception of n-dimensionally generalised social space or social being.

The two final principles are:

16. The Principle of an Unlimited or Unbounded Self; and
17. The Principle of MetaReality

The self at the level of the ground-state, that is our transcendentally real self, is a self sustaining an embodied personality, from which negative incompleteness has been eliminated, so that all the infinite powers and potentialities of the ground-state can flourish in and through that embodied personality. The fact that the

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their depression or their elation; as you can feel the pull of despair in going into the business offices of a company about to go bust. These things, these emotional states are immediately perceptible, in that way, tangible.

[18] Thus we have already seen that we cannot both listen and think or perceive and think or act and think; and the paradigm of thinking leading to action is false. Rather, insofar as thought is involved, then we must agree with Aristotle that the conclusion of a practical syllogism is an action not a thought. But actually what I have been arguing is that to think of practical reasoning in this way is false. For what happens in the practical sphere is that we must always act first and then think later. We do not act by thinking about acting, we just act by acting and the thought of the action is not the cause of the action, but something insofar as it is relevant at all which we retrospectively invoke after the action must have been successful. At some level of determinacy, the action must have been spontaneous and 'unthought'.

embodied personality will still exist in a world which is constrained by certain physical parameters and laws does not qualify the unboundedness of the self. For in principle there will be an infinite and ever expanding number of ways in which that self can act in relation to any finite number of constraints. Moreover such selves will still be unique, concretely singularised, so that we can imagine them expanding along different rays of development from their ground-states on the cosmic envelope.

I have already argued that metaReality signifies the ground, truth (in the sense of alethia) and first reality of being; and that at the same time it designates the constellational unity of non-duality and duality; and, in our present epoch, the constellational unity and struggle of non-duality and demi-reality for the realm of relative (dual) reality. Indeed the central question today is that of the struggle between non-duality and demi-reality for the world of relative reality, that is the planet as it would be without instrumental reasoning and the totality of master–slave relations. For the first time in recorded history there is no alternative to the dominant system at the level of duality, so the real struggle is no longer between two opposing sets of oppressive systems or sets of master–slave relationships, but between demi-reality, in its monological globally hegemonic form, and its non-dual basis or ground. This itself gives a reason for (relative) optimism that, especially in view of our extraordinary global interconnectedness, the non-dual realm that entirely sustains this system, contains the seeds of a qualitatively different and potentially universal kind of social order.

Section 4: The Kabbala of Transformation and the Dynamics of Self-expansion

The key to the transformation of the self is an almost alchemical process of **dis-identification**. It is not surprising that the philosophy of metaReality should isolate misidentification as a major source of error, if not indeed, in a certain sense, the only source of error, insofar as mis-predications and mis-equations are, definitionally, forms of mis-identifications. For the philosophy of metaReality is, as we have seen, a philosophy that stresses identity,

identification and unification as distinct from critical realism which, like all hitherto existing philosophies, is a philosophy of non-identity and duality, though not in the case of critical realism a philosophy of dualism. In fact we have seen that the advantage of critical realism over irrealist philosophies is precisely that it breaks free from the ideological world of dualism and split, which characterises irrealist philosophies, which reflect the interests of systems of oppression and heteronomy in the realm of demi-reality.

Mis-identification is not however a new theme in emancipatory discourses. Thus the Buddha argued that we mistake the character of our pain and suffering when we seek to satisfy it with transient objects. Rather, the solution must be sought in overcoming our *avidya* or ignorance which leads us to craving and desire rather than to freedom from craving and desire which is attainable. So according to Buddha we have mis-identified the cause of our suffering and its cure. We need not go into this parallel any further here.

The primary mis-identification which is involved here is the identification of our selves with our egos rather than our transcendentally real ground-states. A real basis for this mis-identification lies in our existence in the realm of relative reality as finite, limited embodied personalities, and we can also say that we mistake our existence as embodied personalities (with or without an ego) for our existence as ground-state beings connected on the cosmic envelope to the ground-states of all other beings in creation. (So underlying this secondary mis-identification would be a real truth that we are indeed as embodied personalities spatio-temporally separate and qualitatively distinct from all other beings, a truth which is only false when put in the context of a belief that our existence as embodied personalities is exhaustive.)

Dis-identification with the ego presupposes some mode of access to our transcendentally real selves. In Chapter 1 we saw this takes the form of a kind of clearing that is involved when we suspend the normal operations of the mind, the cravings of our emotions and the addictions and pain of our physical bodies. Typically this suspension of the normal operations of the mind has been associated with practices such as meditation or prayer, or

seen to be a very rare phenomenon which occurs in the context of peak or bliss experiences, say on a walk in nature at sunrise or while listening to a Bach concerto. However I have argued that actually it is not at all difficult or unusual to get in to a non-dual state of consciousness, in which the illusions associated with the mis-identification of who we are, in our most fundamental nature as transcendentally real beings located on the cosmic envelope, with our egos or the play of our minds, fall away. Rather, whenever you listen to me then you immediately suspend the normal operations of your mind, you are not thinking but listening. Similarly, when you watch television, you are just following the story or news, or whatever. (Of course you may also be distracted and not following it completely—but that is another story.) If we take the paradigm of your listening to me or your reading me, then we can see there is no ego involved, you are totally at one with my words and I with you. So in this non-dual state there is neither ego nor thought. But note also that you are not aware of any desires or fears, attachments or aversions; or really when focused aware of any pain or pleasure in your physical body. Note too that when you are listening to me you are entirely here with my words, in my words, not half here with my words or half at home or in the pub or wherever. And note also that you are here now, in the present totally focused, not in the past or in the future superimposed in some way in the present in which we both exist. So, in a very small way perhaps, but in a way which has not been noticed by philosophers of non-duality before, in our most routine everyday experiences we must truly identify with who we are, or at least not make the mistake of identifying with our egos or our minds or the flux of thoughts drifting from the past into the future or the emotions associated with the same temporal flow, emotions which link our mind to the pains and pleasures we may experience in our bodies. No. Rather, when you listen to me or I listen to you then we speak ground-state to ground-state, we communicate as consciousnesses directly not through the mediation of thought and hence mind; or through emotional disturbance or through any physical mediation. Therefore we are immediately accessing our ground-state, and its consciousness, in the most quotidian experiences of our everyday life.

Of course we are not normally aware of this, that is to say this access is unselfconscious and unreflected. So the next step in this **dialectic of dis-identification**, which is the first moment in the process which I am calling the **kabbala of self-transformation**, is to be aware of what we are doing when we are in a non-dual state. And to get to this position of self-awareness in non-duality, you may indeed need to engage in what in *From East to West*[19] I called **dialectics of inaction**, as a special exercise. You may need to become aware of the way you routinely access your ground-state or transcendentally real self. And for that you may need to make *accessing your ground-state* the object of a conscious intentional project on the part of your embodied personality. And for this you may need a practice of inaction or suspension or conscious access. Now this is very subtle. Because if you set out to meditate and you watch yourself meditating and you ask yourself: 'Am I in fact at my ground-state or in my transcendentally real self?', then you are now in a dualistic mode, and certainly not at your ground-state or in transcendental consciousness.

So normally you have to access your transcendentally real self, that is the real you who you are, by doing something else which is designed to pull your consciousness into a state of non-dual unity with your ground-state or transcendental consciousness; that is to a position which constitutes the first form of transcendence that I isolated in Chapter 1, that is **transcendental retreat**, or transcendence into your own subjectivity or self. And for this you need a deliberate procedure, until you can spontaneously or at will access your ground-state consciousness. This procedure will need to be one characterised by a **single-pointed** orientation to access of your ground-state consciousness.

So when you have decided what your procedure for single-pointed access to your ground-state is—whether it be meditation following a mantra or contemplation or reaching a peak of blissful experience by transcending in a particular activity, which may range from running to listening to music—you will get a feel of what your ground-state in its own suchness is or feels like, you

[19] Routledge, London and New York, 2000.

will experience that transcendental or supramental consciousness which is what you most essentially are, which is informed by that immanent or cosmic divine ingredient which makes you part of the ultimate nature of the universe, and you will experience something like the *sat-chit-anand* or bliss-consciousness of being. In this pure state of presence, self-presence to yourself, you will be in a state which is at once now and eternal, at once here and everywhere, at once completely restful and empty and at the same time maximally alert (in a state of readiness to act) and fully aware—in a form of awareness which has a qualitative richness about it which is very difficult to put into words and may well be different for everyone and for anyone who has that experience of complete absorbed self-identity or self-unity in rest twice.

The next stage in the dialectic of dis-identification, having understood the need for re-identification and having carved out for yourself that in which, in single-pointed inaction, you can access and-qualitatively experience the consciousness of your ground-state, is to make that consciousness at your ground-state the **witness** of everything you do. So what you need is to have your transcendentally real consciousness, that is the consciousness of your ground-state as the witness to all your activities in the totality of your life. And you can actually practice being in a non-dual mode and being aware of your awareness as part of that non-duality.

The idea we have to counter is the idea that you cannot make your awareness a part of your awareness. The first misapprehension we have to counter is the supposition that the content of a non-dual state is, or must be, simple, single, atomistic or punctiform. When you are lost in absorption at a sunset or a picture, you are totally one with a holistic unity, and you will be able to differentiate elements within that unity. It is true you grasp it as a unity but you see every differential feature within it and their relationships with each other. So if I utter one sentence to you and another sentence which differs by only one syllable but has a different meaning, a meaning which you will also understand, you will be at one with a different whole. So the non-dual experience is rich, differentiated and holistic. Even when you are doing something as simple as driving a car you are aware of an

infinite number of different aspects, the curves in the road, the position of your clutch, the weather, etc.

We now need to make a series of differentiations to get a closer grip on the structure of non-dual experience. We can make use of the distinction that Polanyi made between primary or focal and secondary or subsidiary awareness. Thus in attending to a face (the primary awareness), we can, and indeed in a way must, at the same time be aware (in secondary awareness) of all the different features of that face. A related distinction is that between engaged and detached non-dual attention. Thus in following a television play, you can follow it non-dually in a detached way, as a pure observer, or you can become (again non-dually) absorbed, caught up, actively participating (and even identifying with some particular character) in the unfolding drama. Both are forms of non-duality, but in the second, we have not only transcendental identification, but transmission, so to speak, of content or feeling, that is to say reciprocity. It is precisely the detached mode which allows us to make a state of our consciousness (which we may wish to move out of, say a state of angry consciousness) the object of our consciousness, in a second order reflexive shift back or retreat. Moving back in this way allows us to detach the anger or whatever from our being. A third distinction we need to make is between awareness and perception in the form of seeing, for example. Thus to be aware of myself as sitting in this room I do not have to, so to speak, physically see myself. Or, to make a fourth distinction, the form of my awareness may be called a kind of 'seeing', moving into the 6R realm of re-enchantment. Then, in a certain way I may have a picture of myself as sitting in a chair in this room (where the chair is identified precisely as something to sit on, rather than merely as a material object of a particular kind) and I do see myself as a totality, in a way in which I do not when I am using or merely interpreting the vision of my eyes, as purely physical sense organs, rather than prosthetic or sense-extending devices. So this then is a form of perception or awareness which involves an extended sense of perception.

Hence it is a mistake to suppose that, in a non-dual state, one cannot be **aware of one's awareness**. On the contrary, you

can be aware of the fact that you are aware of something. If I look at a picture I can be aware, in the total context of my absorption with that picture, of the fact that I am aware of it. In the holistic field of my awareness or conscious perception of that picture, my awareness is part of the field that I am aware of. If I am sitting in an auditorium intently following a play, I can be aware of the fact that I am sitting intently following that play. Even though I may not physically see myself sitting, I know that I am sitting, I am aware that I am sitting and in this extended sense of perception I see myself as sitting intently following that play. So that just as consciousness is a greater category which encompasses as a sub-set thought, so we may say that awareness is a greater category which encompasses as a sub-set physical sight.

If something happens to disrupt my awareness I will immediately know exactly where I am. Thus being aware of a whole does not preclude awareness of my awareness within that whole. We must reject the structure in terms of which we think consciousness, awareness or perception, which is based on a model of an atomistic perceiver dislocated from an object conceived equally atomistically as the object of that perceiver's awareness. But subject–object duality is as faulty a model of perception or consciousness or awareness here as it is for most of the rest of life. For not only is neither the subject nor the object atomistic, but they are both wholes. However, in the moment of non-duality the two wholes come together and become one. Now characteristically subject is opposed to object. So if the awareness is put on the side of the subject it seems that the subject can never be conscious or aware of himself, because he is apart from the object of his awareness. But this is not the case.

There is not a dyadic or binary opposition, or split between subject and object. For in perception the subject is always a part of the field he perceives, and while he is perceiving the field, the field is a part of him, his perception, his consciousness, his awareness. That is to say he is in the picture, he is in the totality, he perceives, describes, reads, studies. In other words the subject is always a part of the totality which constitutes the subject of his perception or description, more generally consciousness or awareness. By the same token the object is of necessity part of his field

of awareness. In any act of perception or awareness the object is contained within the subject's perception. And the subject and his perception is contained within the object. So it is a mistake of the greatest magnitude, to suppose that subject and object in awareness must be separate from each other. And once we appreciate this then it is not difficult to see we can be conscious of that greater totality that our philosophical ideologies describe for us in which the perceiver is part of the field he perceives. And in which the field he perceives is part of him, because it is part of his awareness.

So this shows how one's transcendentally real consciousness, one's awareness at the ground-state, can be a **witness** to all the activity it informs, including all the acts of awareness and perception of the embodied personality it grounds.

This point may be reinforced by considering that a batsman in cricket must be part of his field of vision if he is to play the stroke correctly. Sachin Tendulkar must be part of his field of awareness otherwise he could only say play strokes in front of the wicket or could only play strokes back to the bowler, or when you come to think about it he couldn't hit the ball at all. The ball is travelling towards him at up to a hundred miles an hour; unless he has awareness of the whole field and is totally focused on the ball in the context of his awareness of the whole field he will certainly miss the ball, miscue the ball or otherwise be out.

Certainly we may have to practice all these aspects of dialectics of inaction, gradually train ourselves to see ourselves in the picture we see, or re-train ourselves from the ideology of how we see things; just as we have to re-train ourselves in activity or dialectics of action as we will come to later. It is very easy to practice this; just as it is quite easy to feel the energy or chi flowing in your body once you attend to it, then it can become something you routinely do. In the case of purely perceptual awareness we can begin to think of balls or heavy objects being pulled to the ground and the earth moving over the horizon from the sun.

The next step after beginning to be conscious of your transcendentally real self as a witness to everything you do is to employ the moment, process or technique of **watching**, watchfulness. Once you know that you are part of the picture then you

can observe yourself in the picture even while you are doing things. In Chapter 1 we already saw that the dialectic of watchfulness can go two ways like transcendence generally, either you can retreat back watching your state of consciousness or you can advance forward watching something outside yourself. Here we are mainly concerned with watchfulness in a subjective or retreat-like or reflexive, second-order mode. So if you catch yourself in the state of anger, and you just observe your anger or angry conscious state, then you immediately shift out of that angry consciousness into being an observer of that angry consciousness. If you are in a non-dualistic mode then you will not be judging or blaming or criticising or even naming; so you watch without judgement in a focused way as if you were watching a gripping play. But you step back from and shift to being the observer of that consciousness and as such you are not the consciousness you observe. You are not in the state of anger but an observer of anger. Now if there is something about you, some problem or issue, then often just suspending all judgement and focusing and observing it allows you to see it clearly and trace it back, as I discussed in Chapter 1, to the ground-state from which it derives its energy or force and then the heteronomous or troublesome aspect of it dissolves, fades away.

Supposing you say it's all very well to say that in practice but actually it's quite difficult to focus or attend without judgement this particular problem I have, this obsession which is driving me crazy. Then don't attend to the obsession, attend to your inattentiveness. Attending to your inattention, you will be attending in a non-dual mode, you will be observing your inattention and, as such, attentive.

Whatever problem you have there is a way in. If you have no problems, then there is no problem. If you have a problem and you have a problem focusing on that problem, focus on that. Once you have employed the technique of watchfulness to identify the immediate source of the issue, trouble or malaise, then, as I will show later, we can employ a whole host of techniques for working on that issue or problem. The object here is to reclaim yourself. The object of the process of self-realisation is to root out everything which is inconsistent with your ground-state.

But in a way you must first be able to access and know your ground-state in order to stop all the mis-identifications at work in your life-world; all those things in which you invest your identity which may or may not be consistent with your ground-state, but which certainly are not you. So dis-identifying from your ego is dis-identifying yourself from the principal source of alienation you suffer, because your ego is necessarily separate and sees itself as separate from every other ego/embodied personality/self and everything else constituted at four-planar social being and in the cosmos generally. In fact your ego is almost a definition of alienation. You are not your ego. Dis-identifying yourself from the false and heteronomous aspects of your personality is dis-identifying yourself from the masks and disguises you present to the world to keep your ego, your sense of separateness from the rest of creation, intact. To shore up this sense of identity, we may also invest with particular parts of our embodied personality, such as our minds or emotional makeup or the particular character of our bodies or we may invest in an identity with parts or aspects of our bodies, emotional character or minds—e.g. a person may identify with their physique as a face sanctioned by the fashion industry of the day, or they may identify with their compassion or their memory or their linguistic fluency or whatever. Or we may identify with our past or our future, thereby neglecting the only time in which we can ever act, the present, or some problem or issue which defines us for ourselves. In fact it is characteristic of the alienation that mis-identification with our ego both reflects and reproduces, that we may have many particular forms of mis-identification into which we slip when the appropriate occasion arises. Thus we may have an identity as a victim, as ill, as elderly, or as the product of an unhappy childhood, or an accident or trauma, or a great feat we achieved at some point in our life, or with a bad relationship, or we may identify with our children or their sporting prowess or their glamour or success or whatever. Identify in fact with anything other than our transcendentally real self.

Now it is important not to misunderstand what I am saying, because if you are an alcoholic, then it is important to be aware of it, so you accept all the heteronomous and false bits of

being inconsistent with who and what you truly are, in order precisely to dissolve, disconnect or eliminate them. **Acceptance**, in the mode of 'defencelessness', that is without resistance or equivocation, of the existence of everything which does or may constitute a block or constraint on your being what you essentially are, is an essential part of the dialectics of inaction. For we cannot know what we need to eliminate unless we understand all the blocks and constraints which make our embodied personality a compromise formation, constituted by the co-presence of autonomy and heteronomy.

I have already discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1 the conditions for self-realisation under the aspect of everything you have to lose, your ego, lack of clarity in your mind, your emotional constitution and all the other aspects of your being; including the clearing of your past, including the karma, which has stemmed from what you have clung to and the clearing of your unconscious, and the letting go of any belief you may have in the exhaustive physicality of being. My emphasis here has been on mis-identification, dis-identification and re-identification. It must be remembered that in your ground-state you are already enlightened and absolutely alright. Re-identifying with your ground-state eases the kabbala of transformation, because you can now regard all those mis-identifications which cling to the surface of your embodied personality as parasites which you need to brush off or shed so as to prevent them impeding your transcendentally real self only and fully manifesting in the field of relativity, including the totality of your everyday life. If you can identify yourself correctly, and become aware and conscious and locate your consciousness in your innermost nature, then you will have gone two-thirds of the way to eliminating all the heteronomies in your embodied personality and be ready to clear the karma which has accrued to your psychic being when the occasion arises, and in fact everything which prevents you from being self-realised and free in the sense of negatively incomplete, free to act for the freedom of all other beings in the world and so move further along the road to positive completion, in a potentially endless horizon of opportunities of becoming fuller and more expanded than you already are.

The next step is of course to **shed**, to eliminate everything that you are essentially not. Some of this will have gone anyway up to now just by becoming aware of your ground-state, that is accessing it, witnessing it in action, watching all the elements of your embodied personality and being able to dissolve or disconnect some or perhaps even many of them just by the pure power of attention or observation without judgement. But many will be so stubbornly rooted in the being of your embodied personality, your total makeup as it has evolved through your various life situations and the experiences of your consciously embodied personality in the relative world of duality and dualism, that they will have to be the object of a distinct process of shedding. These processes will be discussed in their appropriate place. This shedding will naturally be followed by the free expression of your ground-state qualities, free now (since you have let go of those constraints and fetters which hampered and hindered them) to flower and develop.

Unfortunately socialised embodied personalities do not function like that. And so once you have got rid of your anger or your sloth then you need in a way to replace it with something else, in a dialectic of **embodiment** in-building virtues, skills, excellences, knowledges, etc. to stop what you have eliminated slipping back in, in one guise or another, and filling a vacuum which your ground-state has so far not been able to flower. In any event, in the long run we are talking about a full embodiment and realisation of qualities of your ground-state or qualities consistent with them in your being. But of course the ultimate test is how you act, how your personality is when you are taken outside the context of working on it, and engaged in just working (with it) in the world. That is to say the test is whether you are a better, truer, more authentic or consistent being in your normal or transformed action in the world. Again here a vacuum may have to be filled by engaging in new practices, transformed practices, or really new practices, for example practices of excellence, in which you embody new knowledge, new virtues and skill; ideally and naturally these should be ones which flow from or are consistent with your

dharma, and insofar as you have eliminated the mis-identities you have given yourself then you will be more aware and free to appreciate what it is that you truly are and how it is that you truly want to be, so these should come naturally to you or the choice that you would make should be a natural one.

Let us briefly summarise the dialectics of dis-identification:

Dialectics of access, dialectics of clearing space to become conscious of that which you access spontaneously and routinely; dialectics of becoming aware of your own awareness in your field of awareness, or of witnessing generally, dialectics of watchfulness and utilising the power of awareness or attention; dialectics of acceptance of all the flaws that coexist in your embodied personality with the glory of your transcendentally real self at the ground-state. Then you now know, following the completion of these dialectics of dis-identification, what you really are. You do not have to become someone different. You are absolutely right as you are, all you have to forego, or let go of, are the mis-descriptions that you have given yourself or that others 'gift' to you. Once you know who or what or how you are then you work on eliminating or shedding all those aspects which are inconsistent with it, while practising being a witness of everything you do. Eventually when the dialectics of shedding are complete then you will be free to realise your dharma in a way in which your transcendentally real self, your ground-state, can witness its flourishing in the context of your developing embodied personality as it acts in an embodied and engaged way in the world of relative life. You will have no sense of separation from the rest of being so you will be spontaneously oriented to the removal of alienation wherever it exists. And you will do this not merely or even primarily because those ills and alienations impede the full flourishing of your own dharma or potential in the world, but because you will feel the unfreedom and heteronomy of other beings as your own, since there is no sense of separateness from them. This does not mean that you will lose referents of your point of action, it is merely that your actions will not privilege yourself as distinct from the rest of creation.

Section 5: The Self: Exercises—Work In

Life versus life situation. Your life is a feature of your transcendentally real self. Your life situation is something that you take it to be. What we are concerned with here is life examination. Where am I going? How, with what quality, am I getting there? What are my objectives in life? What is the meaning of my life? Why am I here? What choices have I made? What would I really like to do, if I had a carte blanche or was a tabula rasa? If I could start from scratch who would I like to be? What is my original base? What are my dreams, fantasies? Do I have nightmares? Do I experience déjà vu? Do I feel that I have been in this situation now before? If so what would I have learnt? Can I hear my inner voice? Equally important do I listen to my body? Do I feel in my heart? Or my solar plexus? Am I aware of my body while I am talking? Am I aware of what is happening behind me, around me, am I part of my field of awareness or merely an observer? And when I think of me how do I think of me?

Prolegomenon to Chapter Three

Don't Think You Are Who You Think You Are

You are not who you think you are. Your existence is founded on a huge error, a categorial mistake of the first moment. But it is a causally efficacious one (that is to say it has all the properties of the demi-real realm). Moreover, it is an error of identification—you mis-identify yourself. (Hence it is something which the philosophy of metaReality is particularly apt to situate). Furthermore this error of mis-identification is in your mind, the most prized product of our culture, the *specifica differentia* of our species. This mind which you use to mis-identify yourself is our greatest force of (creative) destruction. We are living in a civilisation, a world which is the product of mind, objectified in technologies which are wreaking havoc on our environment, on our social systems which reify and commodity us all; objectified and re-internalised in our relationships they make us strangers and aliens to each other and every other being; objectified in our own mis-identification they lead us to think, in the egoistic fallacy, that we are separate from each other and the rest of being; and moreover they lead us to think this artificial caricature, this isolated separate thing is what we really are.

Moreover you use your mind to create time, history for yourself in which you can bathe in nostalgia for the past and swim in

glorious anticipation of the future, so neglecting now, which is the only moment in which you can live and act. And then you live in the state of continual apprehension and anxiety about a future in which you know you must die, and you will lose not only everything you possess and own but the most precious thing of all, the self you have made for yourself, the mis-identification of your doing.

But you are actually not that ego, nor the embodied personality in which it reposes. You are rather something which is completely unique and indeed immortal, or at least as old as the hills or the cosmos—and if you are not as old as the cosmos, then as part of its envelope, located on its ground-state, you are as eternal and immortal as the rest of it. In short at your most basic level of being, you are divine.

So to live a life inconsistent with this is to live a sort of a lie, or at best a compromise with the truth. And to live a lie like this, to live that sort of compromise you might as well in fact be dead. When on the other hand you recognise or acknowledge the cosmic or divine ingredient within yourself then you will recognise the cosmic or divine ingredient in every other being, and you will no longer be living a lie or a compromise; and you will be in a position to help other beings who live in a world of mists and vapours to perceive their own truth for themselves. For there is nothing wrong in being in error. The only thing wrong is to live in a state where you know you are in error. That is the real compromise. So this book is really designed to encourage you to be as true to yourself as you can. If you do not find yourself convinced by these arguments and ideas, and if you have tested them out for yourself and they fail, they don't work for you, that's fine. If something works for you then pluck it out like a jewel you have discovered while beach-combing along the ocean coast among the seaweed and in the sand. Or like a nugget of gold that you have discovered in a stone gathering moss as it rolls down the hill, pull it out and keep it. Then one day you may go back to that beach or that hill and find something else. That's fine too.

Chapter Three

The Zen of Creativity and the Critique of the Discursive Intellect

Section 1: Five Circles of Creation

In Chapter 2 we have already witnessed the widespread alienation experienced at all four planes of social being. Just to recapitulate, these four planes of social being are those constituted by:

[a] our material transactions with nature;
[b] our social interactions with each other;
[c] social structure; and
[d] the stratification of our personalities.

These four planes of social being are characteristically lived through the habitus, to borrow an expression of Bourdieu, of four circles of our social existence. Corresponding to [a] we have the circle in which we live as material organisms, in metabolic exchange with our material environment. This exchange is primarily constituted through the senses, the faculties of action and the further *tattvas* of the *tanmatras* (or the objects of the senses) and the *mahabhutas* (the elements out of which the material universe is structured).[1]

[1] These *tattvas* are all subject to the play of the three *gunas*, namely the *rajas* or the external stimulus or force; the *tamas* or the internal inertia; the *sattvas*,

[b] corresponds to the cycle of our relationships and relates to the emotional aspect of our personality, and is dominated by feelings and values just as [a], which relates to the physical aspect, is dominated by the impressions and activities of the sense and related organs, [c] corresponds to the cycle of our work or socio-ergonic activity, which corresponds to the mental aspect of our personality and is dominated by our thoughts, ideologies and belief systems. Finally [d] corresponds to the circle of our self and relates to the spiritual aspect of our personality and is informed by the transcendental and intuitive aspects of our consciousness. It will be clear also that these correlations can be further extended in the following way:

The plane of social being which is [a] corresponds to the level of 4D or transformative praxis, that is our physical objectification or making in the world. The plane of [b] corresponds to 3L or totality and to our relations and social action with each other, and our formative and emotional life. The plane [c], namely that constituted by social structure and correlated with our minds and their productions, corresponds to the level of 2E or negativity. And finally the plane constituted by [d], namely that of the stratification of our personalities, corresponds to the level of 1M of ontology, which encompasses the domain of all the implicit, enfolded, co-present but unawakened elements in our being, which relates directly to our deeper spiritual or ground-state nature. Finally we can see that each of these elements or planes have characteristic binding or cohering mechanisms. Thus at [d] we have the coherence provided by the ground-state situated at the cosmic envelope; at [c] we have the cohesion provided by ideologies and belief systems; at [b] we have the coherence provided by rituals, ceremonies and routines; and finally at [a] the binding mechanisms of the law and sedimented practices codified and regulated by rules and customs.

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namely the resulting synthesis. The three *gunas* are reflected, in some manner, in the Einsteinian conceptions of energy, mass and light [$e=mc^2$].

Time as a Creation of Mind

2E is of course the domain of emergence and process, and corresponds, at a cosmic level, to the genesis of a world of becoming, relativity and duality (though not necessarily of dualism and split, which happens at 3L when the binding mechanisms of the cosmos come into play, as it spaces itself out, to contain it). And 2E is, as we have seen, the domain of ontology which maps onto mind in the morphogenesis of action.

Although there is evolution, process, rhythmic becoming and spatio-temporality before mind, there is no specific sense of apprehension of past, present and future (McTaggart's A Series) and the B-serial measure of earlier than, simultaneous with and later than (McTaggart's B Series)[2] is, or seems to be, a specific creation or novelty of mind. For example, though there may be anticipation, geared into individual, group or species experience, in the case of animals—a point brought vividly home to me when I lived close to an abattoir in Oxford and I could feel and hear the fear of the animals, who were about to be slaughtered—they do not have a conception and are not dominated by a lived-flow, of past, present or future. Life for them is live always in the now, and the past takes the form of experience and the future of novelty or emergence. Animals neither live in the past nor for the future. On the other hand our lives are dominated subjectively by *time angst* and objectively by *clock time*. Clock time is of course related to natural rhythms, but it is man's mind which measures, quantifies and homogenises, calculates and plans around them, or its measure, now universalised the other side of the Thames (at Greenwich) in GMT from the city of London, where the other universal measure dominating our civilisation, *money*, first found global hegemony.

[2] For a discussion see my *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, chapter 3.6 passim. There I also attempted to thematise the impact of the presence of the past and the future.

The aspiration of freedom or self-realisation must be to live in, and only in present-moment awareness, to be now,[3] not in the past or in the future, or under the impact of the grid of past, present and future thrown over our lives. That is, to live a life neither determined by our past, our memories, our habits, our fixations, our karma, circumstances or genes, all manifestations of the presence of the past; nor dominated by the future, that is for the results, consequences, anticipations or goals of action in the future. This would be to live neither in expectation/dread nor in nostalgia/regret but in the present, informed by (in-built) experience. This is something which is extraordinarily difficult in our world of demi-real duality. Moreover, not to live in the now makes it very difficult for us to be fully here and not somewhere else also. Only a century ago a ride from London to Bristol meant we had to put our watches and clocks back twenty minutes, another place, another time, a visible reminder of a difference, a difference between being here and being there in Bristol. Time (and socialised space) reveal thus also the aspects of the co-presence of autonomy and heteronomy, truth and falsity, now and not-now, here and not-here, of split (and so dissipated) presence, intentionality, energy; that is all the characteristics of a TINA compromise formation.

Of course structural anthropologists from Levi-Strauss on have argued that time is not so much a product of mind, but rather of the emergence of historicity from the cold concrete societies of pre-history. Certainly it was with the emergence if *absence*, the chief 2E category, that time, money, war, regimented hierarchies of master–slave relationships, cities, civilisations, organised religions, ownership (based on possession and control, above all,

[3] Just as necessarily only *I* can act (this is the primacy of subject-referentiality), necessarily I can only act now (this is the primacy of the present moment)—and wherever else I also am, I must also act always and can only ever act now. There is no other time of action. Just as *I* cannot do something through someone else, I cannot act in any time other than the present. But just as when I act in conscious awareness of the primacy of self-referentiality, I have maximal efficacy on all planes of social being, so when I act in the now, I have maximal efficacy on the future.

of irrigation and water supply) all became important, and needed to be codified by clocks rather than understood as cyclical rhythms or periodicites. Both time and geo-history moved up a gear with the advent of world history at the dawn of modernity, at around the beginning of the 17th century (literally coincident with the [re-]discovery of the globe, i.e. the world), which we will trace in Volume III of this study. Three points are worth noting. First, in those so-called static societies, people lived in full apprehension of their past, in the presence of their ancestors, tribal gods, nature spirits, shamans and their myths, legends and stories of the origins and identity formation: that is who they are, where they came from and how they are differentiated from the rest of the cosmos. That is to say that, though they had no future, they certainly had a past (and outside). Secondly, this split between past and future is curiously reminiscent of modernity, and in a certain way possibly all reified societies and social forms, which always speak, on the one hand, of a past, a becoming, and on the other, of an arrival now achieved, so that as Marx put it in his *The Poverty of Philosophy*, there was a history then, but not now. Thirdly the fate of the static societies, once they had been invaded by their discoverers, like the fates of the American-Indian peoples or the Aboriginals in Australasia, was immediately to be sucked up into another rhythmic, into world history, an event as inevitable as the hermeneutic which sparked it off when the first anthropologist asked, say, what a tree was called, or when the first Europeans accepted a gift from the local Indians.

Most of us are living in the past or the future, determined by the past and waiting in anticipation for the future. Our minds replay the past and preplay the future. Our psyches dwell in the past and whatever we do, we do (for what it will give us) in the future. Thus we live in axiological contradiction. Afraid to let go of the past, waiting for a future that cannot come. This is not to subjectivise or anthropomorphise space–time and evolutionary process. Certainly they are real. But as embodied beings there is only one time we can act and that is now. Nor is it to deny that we need to co-ordinate and synchronise our plans, or that clock time is a necessary and convenient measure in a world of global interconnectedness. As in the case of our minds, the real error is

to not see its limitations. If we live in the past or the future, if we live flitting to-and-fro along the measure of clock time, then we will never be living from the only time we can act which is now and the only place we can act which is here. The real mistake with this is that it is only if we can draw back the curtains of the mind and act and live from here and now that we can act from a ground-state which is eternal and outside the optic of tensed time as measured by clocks; be fully present in the present rather than living a twilight existence, half present, half absent, demi-present, split along one of the characteristic fault-lines of demi-reality.

So to overcome the illusion of past and future is part of being, that eternal being outside space and time, which you essentially are, namely your ground-state essence, but fully present in and geared into the now and here through your embodied personality, the only place from and the only time in which you could act. None of this implies that we should not plan for the future or learn from the past. But once we have learnt from the past, we take the jewel of experience, in-build it into our knowledge as part of our innermost being, so it is not hanging around in our heads as a regret, resentment or whatever; that is everything that is not valuable in that experience we clear and release, forgive and forget. Similarly this is not to say that we do not plan for the future. But once we have made our plans then we act in the present; we do not worry or concern ourselves, fantasise or anticipate. If there is something that we can do about it now, then do it we must. If there is nothing we can do, then we clear it from our minds. In this way, as far as possible, we draw back the curtains of our thinking mind, and lift the veil of time, to let the presence of our ground-state consciousness into present moment awareness and activity. Anything else is living in axiological contradiction.

The second paradoxical feature that we need to note is that though in this chapter we are talking about creativity and the mind, the mind and the products of its activity (namely thought) play a very circumscribed role in the creative process. In the moment of creation, thought is under an epoche, suspended, just as any time other than now. Nothing new ever comes from thought (or from the past or future), it always comes from un-thought

(now), from a space between, behind or beyond thoughts (in the present). It always comes from a suspension of thinking, or a moment of supramental consciousness erupted into a space in the discursive process of thought.[4]

It might be objected that surely we need time and the mind to plan, organise and co-ordinate things. But this neglects the fact that whatever organisation is *planned*, what actually happens always depends on the spontaneous, intuitive, holistically synchronicitous, timely activity of agents who step in to repair, remedy or enact the plan. And planning, organisation and regulation is a process which is inherently unstable and one could say risky. To live and act in the wisdom of uncertainty, located on your ground-state, to be as empty and clear as possible, so as to be free, to adjust your plan at a moment's notice, is a far better maxim for action than a rigid conformity to some idea dreamt up in another time or another place.

* * * *

'What is creativity?' Creativity is the production of something new; but since whatever is, is already implicit or potential in what was there before, i.e. what already was (Cf. Solomon: 'there is nothing new under the sun'), what is created is always a new synthesis of the new and the old, of the manifest and unmanifest, of the ephemeral and the eternal. But what is created also transcends, surpasses, negates (i.e. absents and transforms) what is already there. What is negated is not what was implicit, involved, enfolded or ingredient as a potential in what pre-existed it.[5] It emerges, consisting in the supraimposition of a transcendent cause

[4] Thought may of course play a preparatory role but nothing new comes from thought alone; it always comes from the space between thoughts and is then retrospectively brought into the thought process which that new element can then reorganise.

[5] The material cause is what was transformed; the formal cause is what was implicit; the efficient cause is the external stimulus or agency. These correspond respectively, in the terminology of the three g*unas*, to the *tamassic* inertia, the *sattvic* synthesis and the *rajassic* stimulus.

upon an immanent ground, taking shape, form. It becomes objective (is made), standing in its own right, and what has been created, shaped or formed, and made or objectified in this way, then returns, reflecting back the intentionality of its maker, whose intentionality it either fulfils or not. Insofar as it does not fulfil the intentionality of the maker, insofar as it does not reflect back on the creator then it stands as an unfulfilled task; so that every action returns in one way or another to its agent, either confirming or disconfirming the purity and fulfilment of the agent's intention.

For everything that exists or occurs, there must be a foundation or truth: this is its basic-ness, and essential ingredient, implicit or enfolded in its origin in time, so that things must be structured and differentiated in any world which contains change. Similarly for every thing that exists or occurs, there must be a moment of creativity, novelty and emergence, and so transcendence from the unmanifest or absent. Hence, changing things presuppose a world containing absence or negativity. Similarly for everything that exists or occurs there must be a moment or process of binding or formation, so that any world in which things emerge or have been created, must contain a binding energy or force in order to shape things into a totality or a whole. It follows that such a world must contain being, being in process (or becoming), and being as a whole, or totality. In addition, in the human world there must be for anything that exists or occurs, that is for anything that is done, there must be a making, i.e. an objectification of the intentionality of the agent who makes it, a releasing or letting go of his intentionality onto the world. So that in any world containing things which are made, we must think of being, not only in itself, as a process; and as a totality, but also as incorporating or involving transformative praxis or agency: what we call creative work. Finally there must be the possibility of reflexivity, or the becoming aware of the self that has produced the objectification/act/object/result (which reflects back on the agent or the creative impulse or not).[6]

[6] In the latter case this unfulfilled intentionality appears as counterfinality or karma.

Every human act moreover mirrors the creation of the world; and each component of every moment of any process of creation corresponds to some ingredient or constituent in human creativity. Thus the first moment, of being, implicit or enfolded in what exists (or does not exist), corresponds to the raw material out of which the human agent furnishes the new; while in terms of the creative process itself this corresponds to the moment of essential or initial impulse or will. The second moment sees the genesis of the new, the emergence of something which had never existed there before, an emergence which is always a transcendence of what pre-existed it, and always out of absence, always *de novo* (which itself must always contain an element '*ex nihilo*', out of nothing), a quantum leap, or jump, resulting in the germ of a new gestalt, in the existing order of things. This moment of creativity corresponds, in the morphogenesis of human action, to the creative process of thought in which the initial impulse or will takes flesh in the thought process[7] of the creator.

At the third level there must always be a development, elaboration, shaping, forming, binding, totalising, cohering of what has emerged into a determinate whole: this is the moment of the process of formation. In terms of the physiognomy of action, this corresponds to the moment of feeling or emotionality in which a thought is charged with a motivating force which will carry it forward into a physical production, entailing its being made objective at a physical level, so separated from the producer and released into the world. Finally this objectification or physical product may reflect, as in traditional cosmotheogonies, the image of god to the creator, so that on some accounts, considering the case of the making of man himself, allowing god to come to self-consciousness through his creation. In any event what is produced, whether it be man or some product of man, either reflects and confirms or fails, in some or other way, to fulfil the intentionality

[7] This is probably best conceived as a punctuated process—a process of consciousness in which moments of thought are punctuated by moments of unthought, both enfolded within a supramental base from which alone the alethic truth of the subject matter in question can be anamnetically recalled.

of the creator, whose initial impulse has now moved through our five cycles of creation.

These five cycles or circles of creation correspond to, first, the initial impulse—traditionally called the 'word' or 'calling', or the lightening flash or emanation, the creator's will to impose on the world. The second is creation proper itself, the articulation and emergence, *de novo*, of something which had never existed before. The third cycle is that of formation—this is the shaping or binding, the activity or labour of love, desire or worth in which the imaginative creative impulse of thought is now shaped into an object about to be released onto the world. This is the circle of formation. Then there is the circle of making, its physical objectification, the manifestation of the initial impulse or intentionality of the creator. Each of these cycles presupposes the prior ones. Finally there is the circle of reflection, or reflexivity, which corresponds to a moment of self-consciousness or return (namely of the result or consequence of his objectification) to the creator/maker. In terms of understanding the world, in the context of these five circles, we must understand it and any component or aspect of it:

> as being;
> as a process, of creation and re-creation of emergence, becoming and transformation, of negating (absenting) and/or presenting;
> as totalising or shaping or binding into a whole (holistically); and
> as incorporating human agency or making—an agency which is capable of coming to self-consciousness and finding itself;
> as reflected or fulfilled in the objective physical world of work, and its products, constituted in the space of four-planar social being.

Let us take a brief look at this process of creation and creativity in relation to learning something new. Corresponding to the first moment, the first cycle of creation, you must understand, accept, in some way already know it, for you to be able to learn it. If you did not in some way already understand it, then

nothing or nobody could force it upon you. This is that aspect in the process of creativity which corresponds to Platonic anamnesis, which explicates very clearly the sense in which education means 'bringing out', the eliciting of what is already known within. And this corresponds to the self-referentiality stressed by the hermetic tradition.[8]

In general the first moment of this dialectic of creativity depends upon the coincidence of four sets of circumstances:

(a) Pre-preparation, the immanently prepared ground, which could be called the Vedantic moment;
(b) Letting things happen, a space, gap or clearing in the discursive/thought process for the irruption of a transcendent cause onto that immanently prepared ground, which could be called the Taoist moment of just letting things be;
(c) A moment of Platonic anamnesis, the formal condition of possibility for the 'I see it' which signifies the moment of understanding, discovery or learning;
(d) Becoming one with something other than oneself, which could be called the moment of the Zen of creativity (as in the tide of this chapter), in which the essence of the creative moment is given by the formula or story:

> ***Question:*** 'how do you paint the perfect dragon?'
> ***Answer:*** 'you become one and then spontaneously paint your own portrait'.

In this sort of way, Newton became so thoroughly immersed with the field in which he was to discover gravity, or this is my conjecture, that he became for a moment, the moment of 'eureka', gravity itself. At the level of the ultimate or the original, creation must always be self-creation literally *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), for if there was something necessary for or used in that creation then it would not be ultimate or original. Thus at the moment of origin we have self-creation out of the void. In

[8] This tradition is called after the generic name of Hermes, itself probably deriving from the legendary quasi-mythological figure known to the ancient Greeks as Hermes Trimagestus of even more ancient Egypt.

modern scientific cosmologies, this is the big bang out of nothing. A difficult concept perhaps, but the only feasible one with the idea of an absolute origin, or a basic level deeper than which nothing could exist. So the extraordinary thing here is that the primary category, what existed before anything else and was the condition of possibility of everything, including a creator god, is absolutely nothing, total absence, emptiness or the void. This is the only position which is consistent with the idea of an original creation. The creator self-creates himself out of the void. Inside and after the domain of the ultimate/and/or the origin then we require the simultaneity of internal, external and material conditions for the creative processes, corresponding to the formal, efficient and material causes in our Aristotelian terminology, with the final or fourth cause being the objectification (or the result of the objectification) of the whole creative process in the world.

The second moment in this process is actually the process of learning, that is internalising it, in which even though it may be a well-attested piece of knowledge, it is for the person who learns it something new, a creation of the past which he must re-create in the present, to not only to make it his own, but to see what it is that is the 'knowledge'. At this point the knowledge or information is 'heteronomous', something externally given, albeit internally reflected, which comes to the student's conscious mind as a discovery, the acquisition of something new. Corresponding to the third moment in this process of creation, the assimilation of the new knowledge, necessary in order for the neophyte to apply it on his own account, is that in which he or she binds it back into their own being, shaping it, learning its implications and applications, what to do with it and how to use it, until the point where it is thoroughly assimilated and becomes a part of their own innermost being. At the fourth level, the erstwhile student has now made this discovery a part of his own being, and can apply it, making or producing things in the world, objectifying it in all sorts of novel ways, and in such a way that the result or consequence now stands apart from this making. (This corresponds in cosmotheogeny to god's creation of man with free will.) At the fifth level, the objective result can be more or less adequate to the adept agent's intentionality and returns to him as the

fulfilment of his will, or the consequences of his or her action in the world.

We can thus deduce these five cycles of creation from everything that exists; at the same time we can see the sense in which every human act mirrors the creation of the world and also partakes of all the elements of this creative process. These five cycles of creativity characterise all processes of learning and equally (as we shall see) of discovery, they are characteristic of science, art, craft, indeed the whole tapestry of human agency. Creativity in this sense is not only characteristic of human thought and action, but of being itself, which is punctuated by emergence (the flaring and fuming of primary matter, Fohat, or the ur-stuff of existence), formation, transformation, objectification, reflection, etc. Thus we can note the way in which the five cycles of creation map onto successive refinements of ontology, and the five classical stadia of being thematised by (transcendental dialectical) critical realism, namely:

> being as such;
> being as a process;
> being as a totality or whole;
> being as incorporating transformative agency;
> being as reflecting the agent's intentionality, or as self-consciously reflexive.

Moreover, it is impossible to avoid such creativity, at least as a human being, even to attempt to reproduce the status quo or what already exists is a putatively creative act. All we can do is to become more or less conscious of the ubiquity of creativity; more or less self-conscious about what it is that we create, that is what it is that we produce, which alters the state that the world would otherwise have been in. Such self-consciousness is not only the taking of responsibility for our actions, but enables us to be more creative than we would otherwise have been. In subsequent volumes we shall see how these five circles of creativity can be discussed and used to critique the existing philosophical traditions; how they have been understood in the discourse and life of 'modernity'; and how creativity has been suppressed and misunderstood in our society. More immediately, understanding the nature

of the creative process is a vital prelude to understanding the nature of our own thought and mind; so that this will pave the way for a critique of the discursive intellect, and an expansion of as well as an understanding of the limitations of each of the powers and faculties of our embodied personalities. We shall also see how in our intentional agency we necessarily transcend thought itself, in a way which I will illustrate with certain simple exercises.

The whole schema of the five notionally concentrically expanding circles of creation and creativity can be summarised as follows:

> Calling, emanation or lightening flash, the initial impulse or primordial urge corresponds roughly to being and 1M ontology [and will]
> Creation is implicit in being, presupposed by involution (or the descent of consciousness/spirit) and explicit in becoming; and corresponds roughly to 2E of negativity and emergence [and mind/thinking/meaning]
> Formation connotes elaboration or binding (to the appropriate degree), is presupposed by evolution and corresponds roughly to 3L of totality [and emotion/feeling/vitality/value] n.b. Consciousness is implicit or enfolded in matter (inanimate matter), which evolves and becomes explicit in the evolutionary process including the making of man and man's making of products (poesis)
> Making, which is transformative praxis [poesis] or production, i.e. objectification, corresponds roughly to 4D of agency (creative work) [at, in and on the physical world] and;
> Reflexivity, which relates to the theme of unity of theory and practice; and corresponds to the re-ascent of consciousness to spirit, having emerged in human form from matter, reflexively (reflectingly) looks back on the creator (god), in traditional theocosmologies.

These five circles of creation and creativity exactly map onto and may be used as alternative ways of explicating the content of the MELDA schema or the 1M-4D/5A conception of the progressive deepening of our understanding or thinking being,

associated with critical realism, as successive refinements of ontology.[9] Now we have already seen that in the philosophy of meta-Reality there are two further developments of ontology, which precisely define its transcendence of critical realism (or, if you like, the further process of transcendence of critical realism into the philosophy of metaReality), namely the understanding of:

> being as re-enchanted—the sixth realm (6R) of re-enchantment;
> and being as non-dual—the seventh realm (7Z/A) or awakening of non-duality.

This gives us MELDARZ/A, or, more simply MELDARA (we could have called this level MELDARG, since the seventh zone or awakening is the ultimate ground, mode of constitution and fine structure of all the others).

These last two levels deepen and re-cast the previous five levels in the ways I have been specifying in this book. Thus everything, including everything specific to human social life, being and activity, including creativity, has its enchanted aspect and its non-dual basis, mode of constitution and connection and fine structure (including the enchanted realm which progressively deepens and refines the previous levels, and which has its own non-dual basis, mode of constitution and interior). From the point of view of understanding creativity and the cycles of creativity, there is no need to independently discuss the sixth and seventh levels of ontology, because neither modify the morphogenesis of action, although 6R allows action and causality prior to and independently of physical objectification; and 7Z/A specifies an immediate mode of action which, as non-dual, shares the originality of the word; is creative; manifests life (and totality); is efficacious; and complete or fulfilled. They can be treated as the refinement and underpinning of the other five, in the way in which the fifth aspect was introduced as a deepening of the other four.

Moreover, just as 1M can be seen as a special case of 3L and 4D of 2E, and 5A refines each of the previous four, so there is a 6R dimension, aspect and dynamic to the previous five and a

[9] See *Reflections on Meta-Reality*.

7Z/A underpinning of 1M-6R in the three modalities of basis or ground, mode of constitution and fine interior, the three modes of connection of identification, reciprocity and co-presence, which take the dynamic or evolutionary form of synthesis, attraction and economy (or generalised synchronicity), the timeliness or co-incidence of spatio-temporally spread phenomena, holistically integrated rhythmics, or more unfolding, inwardising, englobement.

There is something further that can be said at the level of cosmotheogeny here. If, as I have already argued, the initial moment or ultimate ground of the cosmos must have been a self-creation of the creator out of nothing, this will correspond to 1M, which we can write like this:

> The self-creation of the creator out of nothing corresponds to 1M;
> The emergence of the realm of duality, becoming and time corresponds to 2E;
> That of the realm of demi-reality and the binding cohesive nature of love at 3L;
> Then the return route in a total cosmic cycle of creation might go as follows:-
> Individual self-realisation corresponds to 4D;
> Individual and universal self-realisation corresponds to 5A;
> Individual god-realisation corresponds to 6R;
> Individual and universal god-realisation corresponds to 7Z/A.

What this would mean is that *the* cycle of creation starts out with the creation of something (from which everything else derives) out of nothing and ends in the return of everything into everything, i.e. the totality, the whole of creation (perhaps a whole from which a new cosmic round may be forthcoming?). Elsewhere[10] I have argued that since the totality is enfolded within every being it is quite plausible to suppose that every being may

[10] See 'Unconditionality in Love', in *From Science to Emancipation*. Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London, 2002, Chapter 13.

eventually be able to unfold or evolve the totality in himself, that is become one with the totality the whole cosmic envelope (initially enfolded in his ground-state). If all beings in their ground-states can evolve in this way then all beings will become the totality and this would be universal god-realisation. So everything into everything would mark the end of the cycle of creation as something out of nothing marked the beginning. And you could say that end must have been enfolded in the beginning as a potentiality. In the cosmic process nothing has thus unfolded everything into everything else and as such all has become one, as all came from one in an initial impulse from nothing, complete emptiness, its ultimate ground.

It is important to note that this makes self-realisation or enlightenment a process which is relative and evolving, as beings and even species (and their environments transmute and evolve). And, if we allow the totality itself to be infinite and evolving, there is no reason to suppose that there will be either a determinate end, or at least one which reflects, as its mirror image, the initial origin or beginning. It must also be said that the possibility of more subtle, criss-crossing, inter-influencing, parallel, lateral and other kinds of universes, of which we are at present, perhaps necessarily and/or indefinitely unaware, means that we can neither assume the absence of a ground for the beginning, the singularity or unilinearity of the process (creation may be continuous or spasmodic, and branching in a multiplicity of ways), or the fixity or finality of any end.

At 1M-level of being—we already know it. This corresponds to the level of Platonic anamnesis. But this knowledge is unmanifest, and so necessitates a process of 'education', including external stimulus for the bringing out or manifestation of what is already implicit or known, in an unmanifest form, in the being concerned.

At 2E we have the level of becoming. This is the moment of discovery or 'eureka'. Or we are taught it. This is the moment of learning or re-creation; as well as of creation.

At 3L we bind it, we make it our own, so that it becomes part of our innermost being. This is also the moment of formation or elaboration, self-formation of the subject and elaboration

of the discovery. This is the sphere of our discipline and service.

At 4D in turn we use it or apply it—this is the making or objectification of what we now know.

Of course all these four moments of emanation or calling, creation, formation and making can be recursively embedded in each other. Thus there is a moment of making in creation; and a moment of creation in making.

At 5A, the object or what we have made/produced reflects us (or our intention) perfectly—it is a heterocosmic isotrope. This is awareness focused on itself; emanation or 'the lightening flash' reflecting back on its point source; this is calling echoed.

The five moments of this creative cycle reflect a calling or emanation; creation proper; formation or elaboration; making or objectification; and reflection or fulfilment. Let us relate these to the morphogenesis of action. 1M, the moment of Platonic anamnesis, in which what is to be created is nevertheless already (timelessly, embedded) there, corresponds to the level of will. The moment of 2E in which it is discovered or gradually learned in a dialectical process (with the first corresponding to the moment of transcendence) takes the characteristic form of thought. At 3L in which it is bound and elaborated into a new totality, we consider all the modes of love, solidarity, and emotion both in the creator/maker and in the created/made. 4D corresponds to the moment of a physical manifestation in the world; this is characteristically the moment of spontaneous right-action. At 5A, we have the moment of freedom, fulfilment in which the objectified product stands on its own reflecting back its intentionality and attributes of the creator.

Thus we have <u>being</u>, in motion, as a whole, incorporating human transformative agency, reflecting or failing to reflect back the intentionality of the initial impulse or the creative agent. Or more fully:

> 1M of calling/emanation/lightening flash, the categories of the implicit.
> 2E—of creation, becoming.
> 3L—of formation, elaboration, binding (in appropriate degree).

4D—of making, of transformed, transformative praxis, grounded in the cosmic envelope.
5A—of fulfilment of intentionality—with
6R—its enchanted resonance; and
7Z/A—its seventh level, awakening or non-dual ground.

This structure will play an important role in the argument of this book. For it brings out certain essential features of structuration, the self-structuration of being, in which later moments are emergent from, transcendent upon an immanent or ingredient level, which, however, is itself a transcendentally necessary feature for social life.

Section 2: Creativity and Ontology

Let me enunciate some theses:

No-one can teach anyone anything that they do not already (implicitly) know. This is Platonic anamnesis or re-creation—for education is the bringing out of what is already in. Wittgenstein put this very well when he said that logic cannot grab you by the throat and force you to understand. As did Lewis Carroll both informally in his tale of Achilles and the Tortoise and formally when he showed that if you will not accept a rule of inference without proof, then you will always require another rule of inference to establish that rule of inference and so on, generating an infinite regress.

This is immediately connected to (a) the fact that for any finite set of descriptions there are an infinite number of descriptions compatible with it and inconsistent with each other; (b) Gödel's theorem roughly to the effect that it is impossible to show any formal system to be both consistent and complete; and also (c) the whole problem-field of induction, turning on the fact that there is no way in which you can ever vindicate an empirical or actual universal generalisation such as 'all swans are white' (which is false) or 'all metals conduct electricity'—because it is always possible that either you will discover, or there will exist, or there may exist a swan which is black or a metal which does not

conduct electricity. Elsewhere[11] I have shown how this is the root or indexical problem for a host of problems which have beset orthodox empiricist epistemology and more generally the whole tradition of western philosophy stemming from what I have called the Platonic–Aristotelian fault-line. These problems are, as I have shown elsewhere, innumerable, ranging from the Cretan paradox of the liar to Goodman's and Hempel's paradoxes to the various Quinean problems of indeterminacy.

In fact it is not difficult to show, by virtue of theorem (a) that: (a*) if a set of assumptions, defining a problem-field, generates one problem, then it must generate an infinite number of (mutually inconsistent) problems.

This problem-field is defined by the absence of ontological, including social (and hence epistemological/scientific), stratification, process, recursion, embedding and totality. Thus I have shown how it is possible to rationally resolve the whole problem-field by situating science as an ongoing social process which recursively embeds new alethic truths of deeper or fuller levels of ontological stratification or totality within itself. For once we have discovered why it is that metals must conduct electricity, namely as a result of their possession of a free electron (in virtue of which we can say that anything which did not conduct electricity would not be a metal), then science immediately moves on to discover what it is about their possession of a free electron which accounts for that. Or when we have discovered why it is that emeralds are green, namely because in virtue of their molecular structure they must reflect light of a certain wavelength, then we immediately move on to explain what it is about their molecular structure which accounts for that phenomenon. In short, to recapitulate, this whole problem-field subsists only in virtue of having no conception of ontological stratification or of science as a process which can successively uncover it. That is to say it subsists on a reified account of science and a flat, undifferentiated and unchanging view of the world.

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[11] See *A Realist Theory of Science*, especially Chapter 3, point 5, and *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, especially Chapter 4.2.

The fact that no-one can teach anyone anything that they do not implicitly know, that is, the truth of Platonic anamnesis, is also immediately connected to the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality. For ultimately 'I see it', 'I hear it', or just understanding it, or just doing it, is irreducible. And no-one else can make you see or understand or do it. Although they can make you say that you see it, or make it 'difficult' for you not to do it, you still have to say you see it or not do it. This all shows the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality.

At a later stage in the dialectic of learning or re-creation the primacy of the standpoint of self-referentiality reappears in the guise of what could be called 'the principle of double initiation', that is that any knowledge you have been given and/or has been elicited from within you, but is still unfamiliar to your conscious mind, must be in-grown or in-built into you until you are in a state where you know it, without consciously thinking it, so that you are capable of using it spontaneously, without carrying it in your head (i.e. you are in a state of inner emptiness, ready to learn something new and apply what you already know with maximum flexibility/minimum preconception), whenever the appropriate occasion materialises. Exactly the same principle applies for virtues (at the level of 3L or the emotions), skills (at the level of 4D or physical objectification), and insight or intuition (at the level of 6R or re-enchantment). Knowledge, virtues, skills and intuition should all be a part of one's being, not something one has to consciously remember how to do, as a heteronomous guide and imposition on one's spontaneous, free, creative activity in the world.

I have already mentioned that Lewis Carroll showed how without basic action nothing can be done, proved or known; which also indicates the limitations of the mind, the discursive intellect and the left hemisphere of the brain. At the same time, either at the level of the first initiation, that is the recall of Platonic anamnesis, in which you just see it, or at the level of the second initiation, in which you have remade it consciously as a part of your being, we can link this in with what A.A. Milne showed to be the case: namely that for spontaneous right-action all we have to do is to just be, just be in our ground-state, to

become what we essentially are. This is the moral of the story of Pooh, hinging on the Taoist moment in the internal dialectic in the first moment of discovery or learning already outlined.

Moreover, undecidability, aporiai and paradoxes (from the problem of induction on),[12] is intrinsic to formal or analytical thought; but (a) this undecidability is rationally resolved in the practice of science; and (b) is in any case a necessary feature of open systemic life, which should be lived in the light of 'the wisdom of uncertainty'.

The 'paradoxes' necessitate for their resolution recourse to ontological stratification, including recursive embedding; i.e. the formation of more general or greater totalities. This is the process of structuration and specification of the discovery of ontological stratification and differentiation, i.e. of nested and branching hierarchies of what has been called the 'great chain of being'.[13] Moreover, even the very concept of a paradox only makes sense:

> (a) in relation to a certain level of thought. For a paradox, which is literally that which is 'beyond customary or conventional belief' [para-doxa], merely indicates the necessity to expand the domain of discourse or thought, and therefore can never be resolved within the context which generates it; this is the first level or immediate role of paradox. And
> (b) in relation to thought. The second level or deeper role of paradox is to take us to a level not only beyond a particular context of thought, but eventually beyond thought itself.

[12] We could recapitulate the way in which the concepts of ontological stratification as revealed and cognised in the dialectic of scientific discovery rationally resolve all the characteristic problems of philosophy. These all turn on the absence of the concept of alethic truth or ontological stratification, a real reason or ground of things, which is the basis of natural necessity which can be discovered in the process of social science by an empirical process of discover), that is a posteriori.

[13] It is worth making explicit that 2E of negativity subsumes 4D of transformative praxis as a special case (transformation is negation, depending upon the absenting of what was previously there); and 1M, that is structure, is a special case of 3L, that is totality in the dialectical process.

On the philosophy of metaReality the concept only makes sense in relation to the realms of dualism and duality. The deep dialectical role of paradox is to take us, or show us how we can take ourselves, beyond the realm of duality and dualism in our ordinary, scientific and practical, including emancipatory, life. Paradox is therefore there, to borrow a phrase from Wittgenstein, to 'show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle', that is, to show the way beyond duality and dualism into its non-dual ground, which our conventional ideologies of

> (a*) atomistic, analytical and actualistic thought (cf. the critique of dualism by duality); and
> (b*) of thought, including even dialectical, totalising thought (cf. the critique of duality by non-duality)

both dominate and occlude or deny.

Section 3: Creativity and Emergence, Absence and the World of Becoming

As should be pretty well-known by now, the logic of scientific discovery depends upon the creative imagination—retroductive-analogical/metaphoric thinking, including the visualisation of models and the deployment of analogies and metaphors, involving conceptual distanciation or stretching, embracing the estrangement and rehabilitation of concepts drawn from otherwise unconnected domains. But in addition to this bricolage, creation in science is always *de novo*, containing therefore a moment *ex nihilo*—this is the absolute moment of 'transcendence' within the relative or sublating 'transcendence', involving, so to speak, 'news from nowhere', the epistemically unknown, ontically unmanifest, but necessarily ontologically immanent source. For if it did not come from the cosmos, either as something we already knew implicitly or as our identification of an alethic truth of some other being, then it could not be something which we could possibly know or identify with or make our own. One way or another it was there before we knew it. More formally creation is always the irruption or supraimposition of a transcendent cause (something completely new) on to immanently well-prepared

ground (the familiar, the pre-existing, the raw material, the ingredients, etc.). Work, practice, discipline are necessary for the excellences or virtues (*arete*, in Greek or *siddhi* in Sanskrit, which have also been called the 'ascetic majesties'), which endow us with the capacity for the spontaneous creation of something new.

Because creation is always also emergence from absence, this means that our understanding of scientific creativity necessitates a radical transcendentalisation of the dialectical critique of analytical reasoning. It is not only that we need dialectical thought, we need unthought, the suspension of thought altogether from scientific creativity. The creative scientist becomes a kind of mystic, a **practical** (scientific) **mystic**. Moreover, it shows that science necessitates intuition and the intuitive alongside the discursive intellect, iconic or pictorial, imaginative and visualising activity as well as sentential formal and discursive conscious activity. For alongside left brain (deductive/formal—of instrumental/calculative/manipulative thought—deeply embedded in structures of oppression ([reproduced in the habitus or flow of daily life, inherent in human life activity]) discursive intellect, there is another 'right brain' intuitive power of discrimination—the intuitive intellect. Both left and right brains are necessary—they must be synthesised; their ground is the supramental state of consciousness, in which the ground-state or alethic truth in human beings adheres (and which enfolds the ground-states and alethic truths of all other beings), and from which intuition correctly flows and which itself correctly guides the (spontaneous) flow of reasoning (discursive) thought. The upshot of this is that poetry, creation underlies all prose and that prose itself is nothing other than poesis or making. Underpinning the activity of both hemispheres of the brain is the deeper supramental or transcendental[14] consciousness coming from the ground-states located on the cosmic envelope.[15]

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[14] All transcendental identification in consciousness is, at the moment, or in the aspect, of the non-dual, transcendental or ground-state consciousness, even if it is contextualised and cluttered by much that is non-ground-state or inconsistent with our ground-states.

[15] Understanding the importance of the right brain indicates, as I have shown

Thus we have seen some truly striking things:

[1] that we do not learn in thought, but rather from the suspension of thought;

[2] that we do not really know how we know, or exactly how we learn, nor is there any reason to suppose that we all learn in the same way—thus some things we learn by example, some we learn from cues, some we learn subliminally; just by being there we take them in, even though we do not understand what is being said, in some way we embody the truth that is being uttered to us. Nor do we know where we learn, it is not clear that we learn in our heads, any more than it is clear that we always see through our eyes. Do we write with our fingers or our heads? Why don't we say we write with our shoulders, or our spleen, why do we not say we write as an embodied personality, ideally from the ground-state of our being. We tend to cut up bits of our embodied personalities to fragment them. We say that seeing occurs here, writing occurs there, learning occurs in this way. Ideally we need to be conscious or aware, from our ground-state, of the holistic field in which we learn or act, and there is no need to know any more how we learn or act to learn quickly or act correctly, than there is to trace out all the infinite correlations necessary at a physical or physiological level to perform spontaneously right-action.

Moreover, transcendental identification, becoming one with another or more generally a context or an alethic truth (as the Vedic formula to the effect that all knowledge is identity), is necessary and ubiquitous in social life. This is made possible by what I will argue is in effect generalised co-presence, the presence in each individual object of every other individual object (and their relations). This is a phenomenon which does not abolish their identity as differentiated objects and their externality. The philosophy of metaReality collapses neither externality nor internality. Thus

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elsewhere (*From Science to Emancipation*, Chapter 9), a heuristic role for forms of labour traditionally associated with women as both necessary for men and all human beings, men as well, as prefigurative of labour in a non-exploitative society of the future.

individual objects continue to exist as physically, spatio-temporally separate and concretely singularised distinctive things, even though they are also enfolded or implicit in all other beings too.

Moving now into the realm of totality let us note how the process of creation mirrors the flaring into and out of existence of the most elementary constituents of 'matter' at the quantum level. The existence of consciousness is also implicit/enfolded in the first moment of becoming and time. Thus we have to say that consciousness, like its ground, the cosmic divine, both eternally pre-exists and comes into existence at (retrospectively) a specific moment in time. Only the dualistic intellect sees paradox as a problem.

Into the domain of transformative agency, note that every genuinely human (transformative) act involves the creation of something new. And every sentence is at least in part a metaphoric [part for part] or metonymic [part for whole] extension and transformation of the old. All prose is poetry. All literal language is dead (decayed, disused) metaphorical language. Moreover, all fixation, e.g. fixed thought/dualistic living (living in duality), freezes and ensnares, imprisons the thinker, his thought and even the object of his thought.

Reverting once more to the primacy of self-referentiality, it should be reiterated that this alone is consistent with autonomy, independence of heteronomy, and with the actuality, which is the ingredience, of our own divinity/enlightenment/freedom.

In Chapter 2 I isolated certain (altogether seventeen) principles of the domain of ontology; here I want to isolate eight principles of ontology, not now considered purely in itself (and so far we have been considering it in this chapter as merely enfolded, as implicit in the guise of the unmanifest implicate order of being) but as unfolded, as explicitly articulated in the world of process, change and becoming.

1. The Principle that Absence is Essential to Change

It is clear that change always involves absenting something which was previously there and/or presenting something which was not there—in this sense, the presenting is also an absenting, namely

an absenting of the absence of what was not there. So absence is conceptually essential to change.

2. The Ontological Necessity (and Priority) of Absence to Presence, and of Negative to Positive Being

But a moment's reflection shows that without absence there could be no positive being at all. We can only identify positivity in the world, in virtue of the spaces or absences which punctuate it. This is as true of a sentence written or spoken as it is of the beings in a room. In fact being itself would lack all determinacy without a boundary to circumscribe it, the boundary marking the space which separates the absence from what is present; and/or an internal space within the positive. A world which was purely constituted of presence or positivity would be a world which would lack all determinate features—one could not say of it whether it was a punctiform point or a Parmenidean block universe. The idea of a totally positive world is incoherent; but, on the contrary, there is nothing incoherent in the supposition of a complete void, in the supposition (counterfactual, so it happens) that there might have been nothing at all, rather than something. So negativity or negative being or absence is in every way ontologically prior to positive being.

3. The Principle of the Dialectic

The long-sought 'rational kernel' of Hegelian dialectic is a developmental process, initiated, powered and remedied by absence. Thus all learning, and more generally developmental processes in society (and in all probability nature too), are initiated by some incompleteness, deficiency or lack; which after some time generates or proliferates into a series of contradictions or anomalies or problems sufficiently strong to be experienced as critical. These anomalies and contradictions are overcome by remedying the generative incompleteness or absence, moving to a greater or fuller totality, until consistency is restored. The crucial moment in this move of transcendence to a greater totality (transcendence here being a relative concept) is played by a moment of transcendence within the move to a more transcending totality, in which the

new concept which will re-totalise the existing problem-field emerges out of the blue, from nowhere, in a moment of rest, in the space or gap between or beyond thought, coming in this way from the epistemically unmanifest or 'nowhere', i.e. absence. Thus absence completes and remedies a process which it, so to speak, initiated, and particularly in the form of determinate absences, is the most crucial concept for our understanding of our development, growth and change.

The so-called 'mystical shell' in the Hegelian dialectic is just Hegel's absenting of absence. This is what I have called his ontological monovalence, that is his incapacity to sustain the central insight he was responsible for. Briefly there are two other features of the Hegelian dialectic worth recording: there is what I have called a 'golden nugget', which consists in the co-presence involved in the moment of transition itself, in which positive contraries are coupled with negative sub-contraries in the process of change; and the 'platinum plate', which is the way in which an account of dialectic or some philosophical subject matter in general generated within a society is not simply false, even when it is wrong, but often accurately reflects the superficial categorial structure of that society, and in that way is a good diagnostic device or clue into the nature of the society concerned. Thus it is surely no accident that capitalism goes hand-in-hand with the Humean theory of causal laws in which the world consists merely in constant conjunctions of atomistic events or empirical irregularities or that it goes hand-in-hand with Kant's categorial imperative.

4. The Centrality of Transcendence

As this is a major feature of this book, I will not comment on it independently here; save to note the way in which it allows us to pinpoint the limits of the discursive intellect and thought alike, matters to which I will return.

5. The Principle of Deepening Ontology to Include Being Processually

I have already remarked that we have to understand being in a progressively modulated way so as to include not just understanding being as such, but understanding being in its specificity as

becoming, as processual, as involving absence, emergence, time and change. This is of course what we are doing now.

This principle embraces the deepening of ontology to include the realm of relative reality, and of duality; and embedded within this realm that of demi-reality, that is of causally efficacious and mystifying dualism, alienation and split. Even more basically it involves the world of space, time and tense, of rhythmics, of multiple overlapping criss-crossing spatio-temporalities—all of which are essential to the process of evolution, which it is no part of the philosophy of metaReality to deny. Just as that philosophy asserts that enlightenment occurs in relative, not absolute being, that is at the level of the embodied personality, not at the level of the ground-state which is already enlightened, so we could say that all the action of which it speaks is really at the realm of the relative. The whole point of the philosophy is to reground the relative in the absolute, to reconnect and reunite our embodied personalities with our ground-states from which, so to speak, they have cut loose. Therefore a correct understanding of the principles of change, and working with the dynamics stemming from the most basic levels of being, working at and with the processes involved in the evolution of the cosmos itself, that is working at or close to the level of the ground-state, means that our praxis is not static but dynamic, oriented in the direction of change in the realm of relative reality, so as to maximise the evolutionary thrust towards the self-realisation or awakening of all beings everywhere. Nor can we assume that any one species is fixed. In my dialectical work I argued it was wrong to assume that the social and in particular the moral (as well as obviously the technological) evolution of mankind was finished.

More generally now we can see, particularly if the thesis of generalised co-presence is true, this means that potentially in an amoeba is the consciousness of Mozart or Einstein, and there is no reason to suppose that the species mapped out by Darwin and his successors are not themselves in a process of evolution; nor that the processes of evolution will not themselves evolve. For instance when you have unfolded more of what is implicit within you, at a higher level of evolution, then your awakening or enlightenment or self-realisation involves potentially more elements

to clear. So this means that what enlightenment involves in one geo-historical period is not necessarily the same as in a succeeding or different one. So perhaps it is not so odd to believe along with the ancient Greeks that every species had its own god, in the sense that every species had a divinity, a divine essence to realise; and if every species implicitly contains every other then the notional goal of becoming one with the totality or god-realisation is there for every being on the ground-state in the cosmos. The thrust of the philosophy of metaReality is precisely towards embracing process and change, openness to the future as an essential part of our being. This will involve living and acting always in the present, learning then clearing from the past, planning for and then thinking no more about the future, not at all denying change. In fact only in such a position are you able to change, free of any fixated schema. Moreover all the ideologies of demi-reality freeze change; it is always in the interests of the ruling oppressive elite to deny the ongoingness of historicity because that would mean the end or the possibility of the end of their own oppressiveness. That is why ontological monovalence, or endism, is probably the primal error of western philosophy.

6. The Principle of the Irreducibility of Emergence, Creativity in All Being

Everything that exists or occurs in the world of tensed time, or times[16] of becoming, every articulation of being must have emerged, occurred as a result of a radical creation, from absence, *de novo*, from the unmanifest, the void, the merely implicit or enfolded or potential or whatever. In the human world, this moment of creation or emergence is

(a) unthought;

(b) involves the breakdown, or occurs outside the context of, subject–object duality and dualism as such;

(c) depends upon the irreducibility of 'I see it!', 'I get it!'—that is depends upon the primacy of self-referentiality, a theme of

[16] On the multiplicity, criss-crossing and overlapping of temporalities or rhythmics (of my *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*).

both the Hermetic tradition in the west and the Vedic tradition in the east; and

(d) depends upon a moment of Platonic anamnesis, that is a moment of recall or recollection, the eliciting or bringing out of what was implicit, or potential, in an enfolded state, in the person who creates or re-creates, i.e. the discoverer or learner of something already discovered alike. The moment in which the discoverer/creator/learner/re-creator 'gets it' or 'sees it' may, and normally will, of course, be elicited by an external stimulus, the 'teacher'—but the teacher may be anything inanimate or something which knows less than the pupil[17]—this is the external stimulus conditions for the bringing out or eliciting of what was already implicit within, but the external conditions are never sufficient; no-one can ever force anyone else to learn or understand anything which they do not freely comprehend for themselves. Of course someone may mimic the understanding, say, of a mathematical formula in order to pass an exam, but then they do not know the formula, cannot apply it or use it, so it is a pretence at knowledge, rather than knowledge itself.

7. The Principle of the Critique of the Discursive Intellect and the Subject–Predicate Form

The necessity for transcendence as constitutive of creativity and emergence in science, the arts, education, practical life, etc. shows the creator or innovator to be a kind of practical mystic. Moreover I want to insist that there is a sense in which every genuinely human act, as actually or potentially transformative of the world (and necessarily as transformative, in the sense that without that act the state of affairs which ensued would have been otherwise), involves creativity, i.e. the production of something new, the production of something that would not have occurred without that act. (Furthermore, it is also worth remarking that creativity in this sense is by no means limited to the human sphere, but we can say if we like, in the form of novelty, it is irreducible to all being

[17] 'Guru' which means to elevate or raise, e.g. from ignorance to knowledge, is not necessarily a human being, and 'guru' may not only know less than the pupil, a 'guru' may be an event or happening.

as such—in which case we are not coupling or linking creativity to human ideational powers, and in particular, or more generally to consciousness.)[18]

From this standpoint the scientist appears in a way as a practical mystic; as does every creative human being in their moments of creativity. Applied however to the paradigm of science, we now reach a position which necessitates a radical transcendentalisation of the dialectical critique of analytical reasoning; a position which understands the limitations of the discursive (as distinct from intuitive) intellect, of the sentential left-brain thought, formerly modelled on symbolic logic and other processes where meanings remain (or are helped to remain) fixed in meaning and truth-value; closely connected to instrumental and conditional reasoning, means-ends, and manipulative, calculative thought. Most radically however we have here a critique of the subject–predicate form.

Traditionally, in philosophy the subject is regarded as fixed and all change is attributed to the predicate. Aside from the fact that we have to ask what it is that changes when the predicate changes (is there not a subject there?, which easily leads into a contradiction or infinite regress), it is evident that there could be no change at all, unless there were changes in subjects, and some change was a change in what was essential to those subjects—so that some changes were necessary and internal, not external and accidental. This then allows us to make sense of self-development, and allows us to understand notions of dialectical and developmental or organic consistency and change. This is not the same as formal logical change but the sort of change which is exemplified by the way a tadpole turns into a frog or an acorn grows into an oak, rather than the way in which conclusions are deduced from premises in formal logic. So we have the idea of self-transformation, auto-poesis (self-becoming) and the concepts which I have elaborated elsewhere of radical, self and developmental negation.

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[18] Though, on the philosophy of co-presence, any being will enfold or have implicit within it the consciousness of the alethic truths of all other beings, even if this is not explicable at its current state of evolution.

8. The Principle of Ontological Bivalence and Polyvalence

Arguably, the thesis of ontological monovalence, the idea that a purely positive account of being is possible and necessary, an idea which stems from Parmenides' prohibition on 'not', reinforced by Kant's later strictures, is the most fundamental error in western philosophy. This has been argued elsewhere and I take it up again here. Be that as it may, the thesis of ontological monovalence and the embargo on conceptions of determinate absence, and change in philosophy and the subjects it informs, inevitably generates TINA formations, splits, dualisms, alienations and absurdities within philosophy, reflecting and underpinning those within substantive social life. The philosophy of metaReality embraces absence essentially, in virtue of the priority given to the concepts of transcendence, co-presence and the like; but it also sees change as constitutive not only of the world of duality, but of its non-dual basis. Thus change at the level of the non-dual consists typically in expansion, that is the absenting of positive incompleteness, rather than the elimination of negative incompleteness. Of course as in all development, expansion will throw new light on what has gone before and so it will also incorporate a moment of re-description, that is transformation, including determinate negation, of previous descriptions and therefore combine elements comparable with dualistic transformative change. So there is no reason to believe that the absolute is unchanging, that the bliss or enjoyment, or, to make it more concrete, the love or creativity we experience or are capable of in life will not grow and continue to grow indefinitely.[19]

Understanding change as involving absence and absenting makes possible a rational account of it; and seeing change as essentially involving always a moment of emergence makes possible its intrication into a theory involving a rational account of learning, education, growth and development; and as we will see later issues a stark challenge to our existing organisations and institutions.

[19] This is quite contrary to normal conceptions of the absolute.

Section 4: Creativity and the Critique of Philosophy

We are now in the position to isolate a *reductio ad absurdum* of orthodox philosophy. We have already seen at the level of the critique of ontology that standard orthodox inductivist/deductivist accounts of science, the hallowed paradigmatic human activity, are riddled with paradoxes and insoluble aporia. This stems from their flat ontology, their lack of the concept of ontological stratification, of alethic truth, of a real ground which would link the predicates in, say, the problem of induction: for once we see that there is a real reason, inherent in the nature of copper, why it must conduct electricity, namely its possession of a free electron, then the problem vanishes. At the same time the alleged undecidability goes, because that is the reason out of the infinite number of logically possible reasons why it actually does conduct electricity. The problem vanishes. Within a conception of science as autopoietic, as a developing process, powered intrinsically, from within, we can see this ontological stratification as involving the recursive embedding of new layers of ontological stratification and knowledge of stratification.[20] Understanding science, and human activities, and indeed human beings, as self-motivating, self-developing, self-growing, also allows us to begin to give justice to what is truly unique about science, the human creativity which has been shown in capturing new and ever deeper structures of reality, as a result of the creative insights of scientific innovators. It is just this human creativity which is also denied by the standard inductivist account of science, human epistemic creativity being jettisoned alongside natural ontological stratification.

A third point can be made here, that the very procedures that traditional philosophy has seen as most distinctive of science, namely experimentation and applied activity, actually involve something else again denied by the orthodox ideology, namely our capacity as embodied beings to practically intervene as causal agents in the world, to create something new, sequences of events which would not have occurred without our activity.

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[20] Knowledge or science is the explication of nested implicit, structured orders of being, as successively unfolding or become explicit in the process, levels in the order of being are revealed, discovered, identified.

This also issues in a critique of:

(a) materialism, because mind is putting matter in motion, as well as
(b) empiricism, because we are causal agents of the sequence of events which allow us to identify lawful behaviour in the world.

Fourth, even on the most naïve reflectionist epistemology, the accounts we have of science cannot capture either the level at which scientifically significant generality is pitched, the level behind the patterns of events on the surface of the world; or the characteristic moves, including their transcendental esoteric as well as overtly dialectical character by means of which it is acquired. Finally this orthodox ideology of science does not permit us to see that science, properly understood, immediately licenses the generation of values, so that we have the breakdown of the fact-value distinction; and even more importantly, that we have a conception of being, in terms of which we can understand that for any human intentionality to be achieved it must be oriented ultimately in a way which is consistent with what I have called our ground-states, that is be oriented to self-realisation, and also that any such orientation will be immediately and of necessity an orientation to universal self-realisation. Hence understanding science takes us to a commitment to universal self-realisation. On the basis of such a commitment we can then of course critique the existing practices of the sciences and decide what kind of emphasis we want to give, individually and collectively, to particular, better, scientific practices, as distinct from other arts, crafts and human activities, all of which, like science expects, are or may be, modes of human self-realisation.

We have been dealing with that domain of ontology which consists of thinking being processually (in terms of the architectonic of critical realism, 2E of negativity). And our critique has turned round the prevalence within conventional philosophy of two distinctions, the subject–object distinction, the subject–predicate distinction or duality—the former making the non-dual or transcendental (including the sacred, the meaningful and the evaluative) impossible and the latter making creativity, self-

development and even process and change impossible. Clearly these distinctions are absurdities; especially so when it is easy to see that any world containing not just duality but dualism will be prone to chronic and proliferating crisis which will inevitably generate pathologies inducing change and necessitating reform or revolution, theoretical or practical. The key concept in sublating the subject–object distinction is the concept of transcendence, which immediately links in with the critique of the subject–predicate distinction through that form of transcendence which exists in absolute transcendence in the process of relative transcendence and is transcendental emergence (out of absence) or creativity. This makes possible ontological stratification and the resolution of the paradoxes of traditional philosophy. At the same time the critique of the subject–predicate distinction makes change internal and necessary, not just external and accidental, allowing a rational account of change, and an understanding of processes as auto-poietic or self-structuring, self-developing, not requiring manipulation or control from without.

Creativity and the Critique of the Discursive Intellect

The very concept of the discursive intellect can no longer be identified with purely formal analytical thought. It must be extended to include dialectical thought, in which concepts are stretched, teased and distanciated, as in metaphor or poetry, so as to bring thought into line with a new or deeper level of reality. The new or emergent will always appear to be prima facie paradoxical, since it will be beyond conventional or existing thought. In fact it must be so—for if it were to be immediately representable within existing thought, there would be no way in which it could be regarded as qualitatively new. Of course the dialectical critique of analytical reasoning must be radically transcendentalised, since the creative act or discovery, the irruption of something new, can only come from the absent beyond or between thoughts, the epistemically unmanifested. This is not to say it is ontologically non-immanent. Thus Newton had so thoroughly immersed himself in the structure of the subject matter he was investigating, that transcending to the alethia, as yet hitherto unknown, of gravity, in transcendental identity consciousness, he could apprehend and

cognise gravity,[21] in a way which was only possible for him. So the transcendent cause always falls on an immanently prepared ground.

In addition to the contrast between analytical and dialectical thought we have to take into account the contrast between the sentential and iconic (picturing, visualising, imaging) thought, which plays an equally crucial role in science, for example in the 'retroductive-analogical' moment in scientific discovery, in which scientists *picture* plausible models of generative mechanisms or structures which if they existed and acted in the postulated way would account for the phenomena in question. Also associated with this is the contrast, or series of contrasts, between left-brain and right-brain thought—the former being instrumental, calculative, linear, analogical, while the latter is unconditional, intuitive or tacit, spontaneous, simultaneous rather than sequential, holistic rather than analogical/metaphoric/metonymic. Particularly important here is the contrast between the discursive and the intuitive intellect, where 'intellect' is just the faculty of discrimination and choice, and here it is important to know we choose, quite properly, on intuitive grounds, sometimes even in situations where there is no conceivable mechanism available to current scientific theorising for that choice. Thus nine out of ten people blow when they are being stared at from behind, though there is no way known to contemporary science whereby they could know this, this knowledge is intuitive and the perception paranormal.

Of course we should not find this too strange, since we have already seen that the mechanism involved in normal speaker/hearer interaction is direct and immediate, not mediated by the interpretation of sounds—these sounds are directly heard as sentences, just as a drawing is directly seen as a duck or a rabbit. We do not

[21] Admittedly this is conjecture. But just consider Leonardo and his remarkable drawings (and anticipations) of phenomena such as flight, or the anticipations, which have been ascribed with some scholarly credentials to pre-knowledge in the Vedas of such things as atomic structure or the existence of the outer planets.

see or hear and then interpret the basic perception, like basic reading (or interpretation), and basic action; we just see, hear, read, act, we do not act, see, hear by a prior act of seeing, hearing, etc. or we could never act, see, hear, understand at all. Indeed as Lewis Carroll pointed out long ago, we could never even draw an inference unless at some point we just drew it, and did not draw it by means of an intervening syllogism. When we just draw it, then the drawing stems spontaneously from our innermost being. We then just do, understand, see, hear it in virtue of those powers of acting, perceiving, understanding which are part of our innermost being or self. Ultimately we perform non-dual actions, in virtue of the in-built knowledge which we have explicated and re-acquired, whether such skills are consistent with our transcendental non-dual ground-state or not. And when we get to the level of our ground-state, of course, we have now transcended thought itself. So, underlying the distinction between the discursive and the intuitive intellect, or left- and right-brain thought, are the ideas of spontaneous non-dual action and the ground-state, and a supramental or transcendental level of consciousness which lies above and beyond as at the same time it ontologically underpins thought, including the discursive process itself.

This leads immediately into a consideration of the way in which creativity involves or presupposes *transcendence*. Transcendence is of course that state of non-duality in which the subject (or agent) loses the sense of separation from something else, the object of his attention, and becomes one, that is in a non-dual mode of existence. Typically, as we have seen, there are four forms in which transcendence occurs, in each case breaking the subject–object duality characteristic of most modes of consciousness. And in this book I am showing how realism about transcendence necessarily transcends realism itself, and leads inevitably to a re-enchantment of the world: that is to the immediate identity of erstwhile being and meaning (the collapse of the 'semiotic triangle'), just as it leads to the collapse of existential intransitivity (subject–object duality).

We have seen that every being or event presupposes the four-five circles of creation/creativity; that we must understand being and events within being as:

1. being;
2. being in process and as process specifically of emergence, becoming and transformation;
3. as totality, i.e. as a whole (holistically);
4. as incorporating human agency; and of such agency reflexively coming to situate itself.

It is easy to read off from these circles of creation the main elements of a critique of the philosophical tradition we have inherited. This has tended to deny being as such and in general; more specifically being as in process; and as a totality; as incorporating human transformative agency; and as capable of reflexively situating itself. How and why is it that philosophical tradition should have come to fail to sustain features necessary for the understanding of human (and non-human) creativity and other features of our ground-states? Human creativity implies of course change, and in particular the possibility of the emergence of something new, and the possibility of those who are enslaved/or enslave themselves conceiving the possibility of this. It implies the non-abstractly universal or uniform character of social natural being, that human beings cannot be understood egocentrically or atomistically (any more than natural things); that progress may be seen as involving attempts to build or shape or bind greater and deeper totalities, including aspects of being hitherto excluded and as constituting totalities capable of reflexively situating themselves, and differentiating themselves from their past (from which they are continuous) and other totalities (with which they co-mingle) or are otherwise co-present; that even the form of change may differ (so that it cannot be regarded as unilinear) and that there can be no a priori presumption of the superiority of the present or the past form of change; that the emergence of change will be substantial, not merely formal; and that insofar as human agency (and implicitly nature too) is concerned it will always

involve consciousness. Put another way (and in a nutshell), what we can say is that in a social form in which human beings are 'unfree' then philosophy has acted so as to disguise the reality of (elements of) that creativity of the oppressed (including self-oppressed) or unfree, that is those whose determinations are heteronomous or in part heteronomous (that is outside themselves), i.e. non-autonomous; whereas what we must say is that the totality of unfreedom, including master–slave (oppressive [including self-oppressive]) relations, depends entirely on the creativity of slaves or the spontaneous creativity of free human beings. And philosophy has acted so as to disguise this freedom, and the possibility of its full realisation, from those human beings, those slaves, from themselves. These slaves constitute the totality of human beings, including the notion of masters who seem to benefit from their relations of oppressing or suppressing other human beings.

Elsewhere (in Volume 3 of this study) I will consider creativity and the way it is suppressed or undermined in:

(a) education;
(b) in the workplace and in the labour process generally;
(c) including the sexual/gendered division of labour; and in the management of resources generally;
(d) and in the reflexive accountability (or self-awareness) of society itself.

Then we will also briefly look at the effects of the suppression or stunting of creativity in the context of recent geo-political history, including in particular its momentum in the logic of globalising commodification and in the demise of the actually existing socialist societies.

Among the blocks or impediments on creativity are ideologies, and indeed all fixed, oppressive or mystifying systems of thought, e.g. of modernism/postmodernism, which are typically mediated through negative emotions, such as fear—e.g. fundamentalism, communalism, in defensive or aggressive mode, including contemporary American neo-imperialism.

We have already seen that further blocks or impediments on creativity result from failure to attend to the here and now, in what is in effect a dialectic of dispersal of energy, including emo-

tional turbulence and distraction. All these heteronomies stand opposed to the ground-state quality of creativity.

Finally, it is important to note that creativity includes re-creativity; and that paradoxically it is true that both every human action is the creation of something new and that everything new has been present (as implicit) from eternity, so that 'there is nothing new under the sun'. Creativity always depends upon and presupposes the capacity for re-creativity, and originates with transcendental identification with an alethic truth. It is important to note that creativity includes the capacity to react or respond in a novel way to a novel situation, in what is in effect a dialectic of double novelty.

Section 5: Creativity and Education

What is the point of education? The approach that I am adopting in this book is one in which there is no incompatibility between spirituality properly understood and practical matters—the approach is neither other-worldly nor egocentric. However if you start from a traditional other-worldly approach, and you go through all the disciplines in which you access your higher self and are in contact with it for several hours a day, then inevitably you will see that your ego and the sense of your own separateness from the rest of creation is an illusion; and that the only criterion for your being a better person will consist in the transformation of your embodied personality, which can only be attested and affected in the world outside the disciplines of the so-called absolute phase of being. To be enlightened you have to be enlightened in your embodied personality; your ground-state is absolutely fine, you don't have to do anything to it and this realisation means that the shedding and simplification of your embodied personality will naturally orient itself to the this-worldly goal of practical mysticism, of transforming the social and natural conditions of being of your fellow beings in the world. Similarly if you adopt a materialistic this-worldly standpoint you will see that eventually whatever it is you want to achieve you will be unable to achieve until you avoid the split and unfulfilled intentionality which comes from you being out of your dharma or ground-state, which means

once more that you will be oriented to the liberation of your embodied personality, that is your self-realisation or enlightenment in being.

So the only objective that education can possibly have is to encourage human beings to come into their dharma and for this the most important requirement is the understanding that every child and being is unique and special, so should never be judged or placed in a fixed or indeed any other kind of classificatory grid. By the same token if you are a teacher, then you must understand and appreciate and value your own uniqueness, assess whether it is your dharma to be a teacher, because if you are not in part, how can you empower your pupils? Uniqueness then is the precondition for any pedagogy; and this uniqueness I have already thematised around the concepts of concrete singularity and dialectical universality. Of course an individual's dharma means that they need to be fully socialised so that every aspect of their being must be catered for; but this catering is not something that you have to do, it is merely something that you have to permit or allow. Naturally human beings are free, energised, intelligent, creative, loving and right-acting. Naturally children grow languages and all the skills that will be available to them in their environment. They do not have to be taught anything, indeed all they have to do is to be allowed to learn.

What is this learning? Actually you cannot teach anyone anything that they do not already know. It is impossible to teach someone a mathematical theorem until they 'see it'; even doing up their shoelaces will be very difficult—thus it is a fact that when those Indians who have never worn shoes with laces buy a pair and come to the west they find them very difficult to wear, but for westerners it is a 'basic action', that is something we do not have to try to do, we just do (though there was a time when this was not so). So the second prerequisite for the learning situation is to realise that the child already knows everything, and in particular everything you would teach it. All you have to do is to elicit their own knowledge. This is the moment and truth of Platonic anamnesis. At a deeper level what it means is that you should be trying to enable the child to be his own teacher, his own external stimulus to his self-revelation.

Elsewhere, I have discussed the characteristic dialectical process of learning, whereby this intuitive 'seeing it' becomes a part of a process in which the knowledge, still fortuitous and heteronomous, still uneasy and shaky becomes so much a part of the child or student's being, that it is one with them. This is the moment of 'double-initiation'. The end of this process of double-initiation is one in which the putative agent has all the knowledge and skills at their disposal; through the full development of the process of creativity they become empowered and skilled agents capable of fulfilling their dharma in the world. Naturally the child will also be engaged in acts of transcendental identification or unity with others. This is the philosophical basis of love, as transcendental emergence is the philosophical basis of creativity. There is nothing more important than the capacity to identify with things and beings other than and outside oneself. Simple transcendental identification moves through the phase of reciprocity in which we achieve not just unity with another being in consciousness, but unity in our activity. It is this level at which it is said that if you gaze long enough at a wall, the wall will gaze back at you. This is where we experience someone else's pain or frustration, we become one with it and it becomes one with us. So reciprocity leads immediately to co-presence. For in becoming one with another in my consciousness, the other becomes one with me in my being (and not just my consciousness and/or consciousness and activity). Thus the whole of being, that is every other being individually is not only external to you and distinct from you, but is also enfolded within you as a part of your being; and you are enfolded within them as a part of theirs. As every being in the universe is enfolded within me, I cannot be free until each being in the universe is free too.

How then do we set about this? The only way I can free any being is in virtue of my own intentional agency. This is a truism. But it is important to realise this. So the first step is to shed or eliminate those elements of unfreedom which are the product of my intentionality, which are part of my embodied personality, which will include the karma that I have from the split intention-

ality which I have performed on others.[22] When the heteronomies, blocks or constraints on my freedom which are the product of my own intentionality are clear, then I will be self-realised. But I will not be free until the blocks and constraints that are in the embodied personalities of all other beings are cleared or eliminated too; that is when the products of their intentionality which are inconsistent with their ground-states are cleared or eliminated. When this happens then we have self and universal realisation or universal self-realisation; only then will I be free, and only then will all be free—and so we have something like the realisation of Marx's vision of a society where the free development of each is a precondition of the free development of all. (And this ideal or something very like it can be shown to be implicit in any universalistic system of ethics, or indeed social practice.) But what we have done is show that this end or goal (telos) of self-realisation is implicit in any objective, be it earthly (this-worldly) or spiritual, traditionally conceived as 'other-worldly'.

Moreover it is important to see that these two goals of self and universal realisation are not to be considered as distinct phases of an individual's or for that matter collective activity. For at each moment on the path to self-realisation the agent will be engaged in this-worldly activities, i.e. practically socially engaged activities; and therefore immediately and naturally oriented to social activity; thus, as he or she becomes a better person, that is more consistent with their ground-states (the only possible criterion there can be for a better person), and so better in the being, and therefore in the activity, of their embodied personalities they will be naturally and spontaneously oriented to act so as to emancipate and aid the self-realisation of other beings. At no point is there a split between self-work and being a better social agent; between self-transformation and social transformation. Becoming a better person means being a better social agent; and

[22] I say split rather than wrong intentionality, because what is wrong for me may not be wrong for you; what is wrong depends upon what is inconsistent with your ground-state, and anything which is inconsistent with your ground-state will immediately split your intentionality. So properly understood, split and wrong mean the same thing.

becoming a better social agent is only possible through being a better person.

Therefore showing a child—which means allowing them to discover, re-create the truth—that being in their dharma means being oriented to every other being's being in their dharma, is to show the child or student that everything in the world is concretely singular, unique and special, with its own intelligence, creativity, capacities to give and receive love and knowledgeability for right-action, and that these qualities are dialectically universalised throughout the whole of creation, which means that every being will be brilliant, creative, loving and right-acting in their own special way as part of the seamless web of being in which we experience the bliss of being one with ourselves and each other and the whole; and that this bliss is something not apart from activity—this bliss of our being is the experience of our being in activity, and in those phases of activity which are at rest, silence, pause, inactivity, in which we slow down to the metabolic rate of the cosmos in which are our ground-states.

And in this bliss-consciousness of being, in our very uniqueness, we are all one and in that commonality we become one with the ground of all being, which if it has one, would be the goal of life. For if one had a choice between being oneself and being also besides oneself everyone else, and that were to be the choice, then who would not rationally lose themselves for that totality, that unity, which is one in which concrete singularity is lost and identity, were it to be possible, with the totality which would be divine, are one. This is the mystery of 'god-realisation'. What has been called *nirvana*, or what the Sufi's called *fana*—for it is the peculiarity of the Islamic tradition that there is formally no stage of self-realisation, because one can never recognise the divine ingredient within oneself, since the divine ingredient does not exist; the only way in which the divine can suffuse one is if it replaces one completely, so that paradoxically one becomes replaced by (and therefore notionally one with) god, who must contain the totality. In the same way when Jesus tells his disciples that they will perform even greater things without him, for he has gone to join his father on his throne, he is saying now I am going to be one with god; not just divine or realised in my hu-

manity, but one with the ground of all being, not just Jesus' erstwhile ground.

So, in the end we seem to be left with two distinct directionalities beyond self-realisation: the first universal self-realisation, which preserves the concrete singularity of each being realised and their notional distinctiveness from god or the totality which over-reaches them all; and secondly for the self-realised being to become one with the totality or the ground of the totality itself, god-realisation. The first is the ideal of the establishment of the 'kingdom of heaven' on earth. The second is the ideal of the seeker of nirvana or fana, that is replacement by or incorporation into or annihilation in god. God-realisation in this sense entails absolute, fully awakened, consciousness of co-presence (and universal reciprocity, including synchronicity).

Universal god-, as distinct from self-realisation, would mean the abolition of the earthly sphere as we know it. No attempt will be made to resolve these different directionalities at this stage, save to say that our embodied personalities must be the focus of all our activity; and when they are so purified or refined and we are so engrossed in the struggle for universal self-realisation, then we may find that self-realisation or enlightenment is merely the beginning of a process in which we touch ever deeper levels of awareness, of consciousness, in which we can talk about increasing identification with an absolute or increasing degrees of absolute being of which we can barely be aware of now. The danger with any religious system which leaves out or cannot think the ingredience or immanence of the divine within individual human beings, is that it will swing wildly into a god-intoxication or feeling of identity with god which will take the individual agent away from the prosaic tasks which he must perform, even if it is only to make him a clear expression for the divine (on an immanent interpretation) within him or the divine will (on a transcendent interpretation) outwith him.

Section 6: Creativity and the Limits of Thought

We have a model of an ego or 'I' which stands opposed to and apart from the world which it controls and manipulates; and in

exactly the same way this ego controls and manipulates its thoughts. In this section I want to consider the limits of thought. The first point to appreciate is that thinking, judging, naming

1. impedes or blocks creativity, love and right-action;
2. consumes and drains energy; and
3. sets up repetitive and manipulative patterns and syndromes of thinking, feeling and acting.

Nothing creative ever comes from thought—this always comes from the gap, the space between thought (when we stop thinking). Very little loving comes from thought. Real love is unconditional and spontaneous. When we think we impose a condition, a constraint, a contract on our love; we take what it is that we have given. When we think, that is precisely when we don't act rightly. When we see a baby crawling on the floor towards a fire we spontaneously jump up to protect it. It is when we think about it, evaluate it, then it is too late. We either don't do anything about it (don't act) or the baby is already in the fire.

Even more basically, thinking can never get us to action. At some point we just have to stop thinking (about), and just do; and that doing is spontaneous, intuitive. But opposed to this is that insistent picture of the subject who thinks and controls his thought. 'I think therefore I am', the Cartesian slogan. But even our thinking is spontaneous. We don't think, we don't produce thoughts, they just happen. We are neither in control of the process of our thinking nor our thoughts. These thoughts and habitual thinking processes are blocked, fixated energy, reifications. Thoughts are things, fixated, bound energy; and the point of the process and dialectic of liberation which this book sketches is to unbind fixed energy, reconvert it into free energy. So if we can't do anything by thinking, can't even think by thinking, it is obvious that we must stop thinking; that is, *unthink*. How? How do we unthink? Nothing is simpler than unthinking. You can't listen and think, you can't look and think. If you are listening to me, then you are not thinking; and if you are thinking, then you are not listening. And when you are listening to me, there is no ego, no T, any more than any thought, there is no gap between us, we just are. This is not untypical, but is a necessary condition for

everything we do; when we watch television, we are just looking and listening and using all our relevant sense organs in a focused way; there is no gap, no duality, no separation between the story that is unfolding and ourselves. So it is not so difficult to lose that sense of our separate identity which we call our ego, not so difficult to unthink, as we might think.

There is a famous Zen koan:

> Wild geese cast their reflections on the water, but the water has no mind to receive them.

What does this mean? Think about it. When you get it, you won't get it by thinking it. You will just see it. (Of course this seeing, this just getting, may be preceded by thought; and after you see it you may then think about how you got it, but you won't get it by thinking about it.)

What we need to do is to access the space behind thought, between thought, beyond thought, from which freedom, creativity, love, right-action all spring. So what is this then that I am opposing to thought (Cartesian thought). What is this other to thought? Consider our five alternatives:

Five Alternatives to Thought

1. Consciousness or awareness

In the Indian tradition, consciousness is very carefully differentiated from thought. Consciousness may straddle thought, but it also lies on the side of the Self. And *buddhi* or the intellect is differentiated as a different faculty from *manas* or the mind. And we have of course the intuitive as well as the discursive intellect. So the second thing to which thought could be opposed is:

2. Intuition

Most of our right-action is intuitive, unthought, just done. Again of course it may be learnt as part of a process involving (dualistic) thought, but it is not itself thought. The third thing to which thought may be opposed is:

3. Seeing

Just seeing is the basis of all understanding. You cannot learn, follow, become, read, understand, know anything except by directly seeing it. If you do not understand what I am saying then you ask me to say it again and you must just see it, understand it; and if you don't understand it, then you must at least just see it. The direct seeing or perception of reality, the non-dual becoming one with that which you would understand, perceive, is the basis of all social life and social (interpersonal—really intra-personal) interaction (intra-action) and all the constructs of so-called civilisation, including most importantly the ideational constructs or those involving thought, from the technologies of production and war to the systems of belief and ideologies in terms of which the world is, so to speak, pre-interpreted for us. All these depend ultimately on that just seeing, which is the basis of all our social life and learning. But opposed to thought is something even more basic, that is,

4. Being

This includes being as becoming (i.e. processual, being as a whole, i.e. a totality, being as involving transformative agency and reflexivity, etc.); the Cartesian tradition prioritised thought over being—an enormous mistake, for patently there is being without thought, and thought must be if it is real or efficacious in any way a proper sub-set, that is a small but real part of being. I have already criticised the mistake of identifying being and thought under the rubric or title of the 'epistemic fallacy'. Equally important here of course was the definition of being or reality as dependent on the ego or 'I' in the Cartesian 'I think therefore I am'; that the whole system should be preceded by a fake doubt, inevitably dualistically confusing the certainty with which Descartes would proclaim all that he already knew, further muddied the ideological exercise; and that too it was 'tacitly gendered men' who could think created a sharp divide between humanity (or at least its male propertied castes); and the rest of creation from which we are even now suffering the ecological

recoil. There is one further thing which is even more important to see, and that is:

5. Emptiness

This emptiness is actually vital for learning or witnessing anything new at all. For if our minds or the appropriate organ were full, how could we learn anything? If we have preconceptions about a subject matter before we go into a classroom then we are not going to be able to learn anything new about it—or at least anything which is inconsistent with or filtered through our preconceptions. So blankness is a prerequisite for learning. But blankness or emptiness is a prerequisite for right-action. For if we have an idea of how we are going to act before a situation, then we are inevitably narrowing down our range of options, cramping our 'style'; to be maximally pliable, to act in the best possible way, spontaneously, maximally coherently, we have to be blank, empty, free of ideas as to how we would act.[23]

So let us take the paradigm of observing, just observing, perceiving, looking, watching, listening. Now we can watch in two ways, inwardly, reflexively retreating, and if we do this without thought or judgement (and just think how much energy thought consumes) we will eventually end up with no thought, just a state of restful alertness, proneness or readiness to learn or act; in essence a bundle of love and creativity. If you think when you are attending or focused, then your attention or focus will be split and you will have to attend or refocus again, if you have not lost the thread of what is happening. In the same way, if you are not attentive to what you are doing, your intentionality will be split and your action will be unsuccessful. If you think either of your ego, yourself or of the outcome then you will be split and unsuccessful. So if you are in a state and unhappy about it, just observe your state (it may be a state of anger) and you will no

[23] Thus it is well known in sports such as cricket that if a batsman makes up his mind how he is going to hit the ball before it is delivered, then that is precisely when he is going to do a false stroke, risk dismissal; or at least not act self-optimally. So only the empty mind can learn and only the empty mind can act in optimal ways.

longer be angry; of course if you impose the judgement that your anger is wrong, then this will not work, because you have not been just observing but thinking or judging or naming. Merely to name sets up a pattern or syndrome or false totality into which that name will drag you. This applies equally if you are angry with someone else. Just observe your anger and it will dissolve, then observe who you are angry at, and you will feel no more anger, but understanding, based on identification, if you are truly observant you will become one with that which you are angry.[24]

Both the inward movement of self-observation and the outward movement of observing something other than yourself will eventually take you to the same point at which you will become one either with yourself or something other than yourself, and you will find, to your amazement, in both cases you will be left through the route of love with identification, with emptiness, that is nothing, or such a rich awareness (what is being called 'suchness'), but again there is no difference between you and that which was not you, but into which you have gone, fully and completely. The extraordinary thing is that the other thing is actually implicitly, co-present within you. Therefore to become what you think you are not is actually very easy: just go into it, without judgement or naming or preconception (either about it or yourself) and you will find that you are far greater than you ever thought (and that that which you have gone into is enormously expanded too), and in this way you will be able to create, love, and act rightly far more than you ever imagined. So don't think, don't judge, don't name—just observe, and in that observing you will learn and become love, be blank, be empty and you will be maximally prone for the best action.

Whatever it is that you want in life, you also will have the intentionality imposed by your dharma or ground-state. That intentionality you can never lose. That will ultimately take you in

[24] This becoming one with your enemy does not mean that you will be unable to engage in strategic conduct oriented towards him in the future; on the contrary, by your loving him you will understand him and that within him, (the force that makes you angry) better and more fully and so able to attack precisely what you need to.

a direction in which you realise you need to lose everything which is inconsistent with that dharma, your essential nature and, in that losing, which the German mystic Eckhart characterised as resulting in a state in which you 'know nothing, have nothing and want nothing', then alone will you be able to uniquely achieve the objectives you set yourself. This means that whatever you want in life, the only thing you can ultimately get is self-realisation; and for that you need a clear mind, a pure heart and a healthy body as three aspects of your embodied personality. A clear mind is an empty mind; an open mind, a free mind, the only kind of mind on the basis of which we can learn and act. This is also no mind—that is everything for which your mind has been of use is in-built into the very nature of your being, tucked away as something you know how to use practically when the appropriate circumstance arrives. But you don't carry it around in your head. No-one would suppose that it was a sensible thing to do to keep remembering that three times five is fifteen, that is cluttering your mind—if you have that thought in your mind, then you will not be able to do anything. So clear mind or empty mind, i.e. no mind is also 'don't know mind', that is mind which is willing and open to learn, mind that has never stopped learning; and the more realised you are, the more humble you become as you understand that the whole world is your teacher and there is nothing from which you cannot learn. But what you don't need you release, clear, let go of. If you have a good memory then sure you can hoard lots of facts in your mind but if you have access to a library or a suitable computer programme, you just have the skills and they are part of your being. You can think and you will think in the situation, where someone else may act impulsively. You are mindful when you are learning something that you just discovered, otherwise there is nothing in your mind—you are in a state of no mind, no thoughts—your intelligence is shown by the fact that everything you have is inside, a part of your being.

Thus we can see that there are three phases of knowledge. The first phase: 'I see it'. In this phase you must be open, a tabula rasa, no mind. The second phase is 'play with it'. In this phase you will be experimenting, sometimes playfully, sometimes in a disciplined way along exercises which have accrued to the excel-

lence or skill which you are learning, when you will be doing things in a structured, mindful way, gaining a mastery over the discipline or technique or knowledge you are learning. At this second phase your mind will often be full. Naturally, you will want to get this second phase, corresponding to the third cycle of creation outlined above, the cycle of formation or shaping, over as quickly as you can. No-one wants to stay in the classroom longer than they have to—moreover it stymies their chances of learning something new, consumes their energy and spoils their chances of acting in a joyous and right way with maximum pliability in some other domain of their life. So we pass over to the third phase in which the person has acquired the skill or expertise in question, in which it is no longer in their mind, no longer taking the form of thought, but a skill, excellence, virtue or knowledge which has been in-built into them, and is a part of their very being. At this stage they will be able to make things with that knowledge, do things in the world, applying it in ways in which it has never been applied before and in situations no-one could have dreamt of. This will be the stage of free mind. Again this will be no mind; a state of being characterised by no thought or unthought, in which we unthink our way through life.

Someone might say it's all very well for you to speak about not thinking, but how do I not think? I am always thinking. Then you ask them whether they are hearing you. And if they say yes, of course I am hearing you, then you tell them that hearing is not thinking, it is precisely unthinking. They cannot be hearing you and thinking; and they also cannot be hearing you and having an ego; and they also cannot be hearing you and making a negative judgement about you, or hating you, or have a negative emotion to you; and they also cannot be hearing you and trying to physically attack or strangle you—so in that simple non-hearing they are actually doing everything right to be and become a fully realised being.

But suppose someone say's that's fine, perhaps I am not thinking when you are talking to me but how do I do it on my own? They might say when I am on my own my mind is full of thoughts and fears and worries, I am always thinking, I can't stop thinking; then you just tell them to attend to their thoughts, that

is to observe, be aware, become conscious of what they are thinking, and they won't be thinking anymore (and incidentally if they have an obsessional train of thought this may allow them to identify exactly what it is). Even more simply if they just stop thinking and focus on their breathing or what they are seeing in front of them. Thinking continuously is actually impossible. Of course most people stop thinking by watching television, reading a newspaper or a book, chatting to a friend. That's absolutely fine, but whatever you do you have to breathe, and focusing on your breath is another way to stop thinking. But if you halt your thought, and focus on your awareness and just be aware of the fact that you can't think or be anything without awareness, just be aware or attend to your awareness, then in that moment or span of attention you will not be thinking.

Section 7: Creativity: Work-in

We have been exploring in this chapter only some of the ways in which we need to work on our minds and our thoughts, as we did in Chapter 2 in relation to ego or sense of separateness from the rest of creation. In Chapter 4 we will be looking at the ways in which we need to work on our relations and our bodies, and in a socialised context. And in Chapter 5 we will be putting it together in understanding how we can work on our own transformative activity in the world. In Chapter 6 we shall further focus on the power of pure perception, showing how it can be used as a healing and self-transformative force in the world. For we are always engaged in transformative activity on the world, whatever we do. If we do nothing, we are still affecting a change to the situation which would otherwise have occurred. So what we are concerned with here is the articulation of ways of transforming

[25] Of course the mutual entailment of inner and outer implied by the theory of co-presence means that whenever we are working on ourselves, we are not only immediately working on the world (obviously insofar as we are part of the world) but working on that aspect of being which is enfolded within all other like beings too. In this perspective from the theory of co-presence there is actually no such thing as solitary or individual action. We are always, even in our most private moments, affecting (or potentially, that is tendentionally) a

our transformative praxis in the world. This is to initiate a programme of what we could call 'inner-work', that is of working-in, as distinct from but also including the familiar concept of the physical work-out[25]—a topic which will be the subject of Volume 4 of this study entitled *Work In*.

Exercises in Expanding Consciousness

These exercises may be classified into six basic kinds. The first are exercises oriented to attention and becoming aware of its power. The second turns on the motility and universality of consciousness, in which we appreciate the capacity of consciousness to identify with things other than itself. The third explore the creative power of mind and thought, enabling us to begin to see how we can extend and channel the direct and indirect, active and reactive, perceptive power of the mind and thought, including visualisations, that is making use of iconic or picturing as well as discursive thought. In the fourth kind of exercise we stretch the mind until we reach a point at which we are able to understand its own limits, together with the limits of the ego and the characteristic emotions with which they are associated. The fifth kind of exercise resumes the theme of the power of attention. We have already looked at this in Chapter 1 under the rubric of watchfulness, i.e. just observing without judgement or thought. Here we consider ways in which our powers of watchfulness can be extended, a topic which naturally takes us into the sixth kind of exercise, i.e. witnessing, which we have also discussed in Chapter 1.

Exercises

(1) Concentration, single-pointedness, mindfulness and the power of attention
(2) Exercises in the motility and universality of consciousness; exercises in identity consciousness, transcendental identification and co-presence
(3) The creative power of thought, including visualisations
(4) Koans and ways of subverting the egoic mind (and thought

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momentous change in the world. We are never alone when we are all one. When we are whole, that is free, then we are at one with the cosmic totality.

generally), especially the ego, the formal/discursive intellect and associated negative emotions
(5) Practising watchfulness; just observing (without judgement or thought)
(6) Witnessing

1. Concentration and the Power of Attention

Concentration is so important because not having your consciousness here and now and focused will dissipate your energy and split your intentionality. In a very real way this will be dividing you in two or more, alienating you from your ground-state, which is your essential nature. For you will be both here and somewhere else, e.g. where your partner is, or where you were yesterday or where you would be tomorrow. If you really need or want to go where your partner is, then you should not be here, you are wasting your time and your energy. Basically one can attend in two directions, in the direction of moving your consciousness inwards or the direction of moving your consciousness outwards. But you can carry your attentive consciousness into your activity and this is what we normally do when we are not concerned with merely perceiving something else or retreating into our own deepest subjectivity. In this way you are attending to your activity. And as your activity will also often, indeed normally, be socialised, all these modes of attending may be combined in different ways and you will still be fully attentive, fully concentrated; it is just that what you (and your consciousness) are doing is complex, differentiated, holistic, but you are still one with it, you are still in it fully.

Attention or awareness is necessary for any state of consciousness at all, yet it is extraordinarily difficult to maintain its focus. Even to concentrate on one's breathing or a picture for more than ten seconds requires great effort for most people. Thus hold up your thumb and look at it and see how long it is before your attention is distracted. How little of our attention or awareness is actually placed on what we are doing when we are doing it, on the here and now—most of the time our attention is at least in part somewhere else and some other time as well. In the Far East the power of concentration is deliberately extended by exer-

cises in 'mindfulness', in which attention need not be placed on the mind but the attention of the mind is placed and maintained on a single activity (such as slow walking). Attention becomes very important of course in acts of transcendence in (or inwards transcendence) and transcendence to (or outwards transcendence). Thus in transcendence in, the power of a *mantra* in meditation or prayer in guiding or stabilising the mind's focus into or at a particular state of consciousness, in which a self-emptying (or kenosis) of the mind is reached so that ultimately the mantra or prayer falls away and we have the mind, or rather consciousness, focused on itself alone. This power of attention is an immediately healing, expanding, energising one. Thus, if you make some state of consciousness the object of your conscious attention, and do so without any judgement, you will find that the obstacles and irritations in that state gradually dissolve. Thus if you observe yourself when you are angry or jealous and refrain from judging yourself, you will soon cease to be in that state of anger or jealousy. Similarly if you can observe someone you are angry with or jealous of, without that emotion or any judgement, you will find the emotion transformed to love. When you become aware of or attentive to something someone else says or does then in that act of transcendental identification you become them (or that aspect of them) and, because you are also enfolded within them, they become, implicitly or explicitly, you. Thus the Zen Buddhists say if you smile at a flower the flower smiles back at you; or if you gaze at a wall for long enough, then the wall gazes back at you.

2. Exercises in the Motility and Universality of Consciousness

This takes us into simple exercises in the motility and universality of consciousness. You can put your consciousness anywhere you like, if you practise. Thus obviously we find it easiest to put our consciousness in or with some other human being, which may only indeed be just to bring out that sense in which that other human being is enfolded within you, so that you are bringing out in yourself a latent property with which you are now identifying and recognising. But in principle this can be done with any object in the universe. Thus the metaphor of 'putting your consciousness in' must not be misunderstood in a physical-

istic way. Because everything is co-present, at least implicitly (or potentially), we can learn to identify with the ordinary and quotidian (or recognise that we in fact in our daily life do so identify) just as easily as with the beautiful or sublime. If within the Vedic tradition the yogic meditative practice takes one most stringently within, then within that tradition the Zen technique of seeing and becoming one with the 'Buddha-nature' everywhere takes us most rapidly in the direction of outward transcendence. Thus we have the Zen practice of making meditation part of everyday life, in transcendence on or at, that is for example the unity shown between an archer and his practice, or a cook and his cooking; and/or also in transcendence with, in communal or collective practices, such as involved in teamwork. This also avoids the traditional separation of transcendence as a special zone of being in the absolute phase of existence closed off from relative activity and in particular everyday life. Thus it is important to appreciate that the utility of techniques disconnected from everyday life must be assessed by the extent to which they allow transcendence, nonduality and spontaneous right-action within the context of everyday life, not (or at least not just) the depth or intensity of experience in the special sphere.

We can practise stretching our thought by reading poetry, doing crosswords, acquiring new skills, understanding new people or situations, travelling, etc.—these are all ways of becoming one with, and thus, more than you thought you were. It is very useful to see whether you can get yourself into a state where you can feel completely at one with a blade of grass; or at one with the meal you are eating. The idea that it is impossible for you, for example, to become one with a blade of grass is silly. For the you which is to become one or to be united or identifying with the blade of grass is not you which is larger than it, any more than the you which becomes one or loses itself in the starry sky at night is much smaller than that sky. We have to stop thinking of ourselves, and our consciousness, as possessing fixed, determinate qualities, that is, it may be true that the physical embodiment of your personality is five foot six, of Japanese ancestry, etc. but that is not the you who is doing the uniting. The you who is doing the uniting in these exercises is ultimately the you of the

consciousness stemming or deriving from the supramental or transcendental consciousness of your ground-state. And your ground-state is at one, in transcendental unity with, the ground-states of all other beings in the cosmos (through the cosmic envelope) and hence is both at one with the very large and the very small, the most inner and the most outer, at one with both poles of any contrast, duality or opposition that you care to think of. For your ground-state transcends all such oppositions (be they natural or artifactual) and dualities. Nor should you think that to transcendentally identify with a thing means that you will be unable to act in a dualistic, strategic or instrumental way against it when necessary. Because on the standpoint adopted here, that of practical, this-worldly, mysticism, you cannot be free until you have most ruthlessly scrutinised, out-manoeuvred and cleared all the aspects of your being, to release those which impede your freedom. In the same way when you are oriented against an unfreedom, a block, the best way of destroying it or eliminating it is to become one with it, then you totally and fully understand it, you understand it and even love it for what it is. And then from the standpoint of your strategic action you are in a position to maximally eliminate it. You have been the perfect spy in the enemy camp, you have reconnoitred, you probably know the enemy better than he knows himself. In order to combat an enemy or opponent, or to fight a weakness within oneself, one first has to transcendentally identify with it so that transcendental identification, that is reconnaissance, is equally a necessary part in strategic and instrumental thought, as it is in the unconditional flow of non-dual action in everyday life.

So these techniques do not necessarily mean that you cannot act in a consciously transformative way and struggle and fight against those things which impinge on your own and your fellow beings' unfreedoms. The ground-state is not soppy (or unsoppy either). In working to overcome something which you are aware of as a tendency blocking your own freedom and flourishing, you will often have to employ strategic devices to overcome it, possibly kidding yourself.

To access the transcendent one does not need a special place, technique or mode of being, a special instructor or guide, though

all these things may have their utility. The greatest meditative practice is manifest in the spontaneity of right and excellent activity in ail the theatres of everyday life, including those theatres which will maximally efficaciously transform it in an enlightening and emancipatory way.

3. The Creative Power of Thought

We have seen how thought has an enormous creative power in the physical world—the physical world that we inhabit, the contours of four-planar social being are the products of our intentional (individual and collective) thought. But we have also seen that our thought and feelings cannot be reduced in any way to their physical expression and/or embodiment; that they exist and are causally efficacious as entities in their own right. Now we know from the principle of subjective or self-referentiality that when we have a negative emotion or thought in a particular situation, the problem, what needs to be changed, is our response to the situation; and this changed response is a necessary condition for transforming objective situations too. It is your only point of leverage on the world. In fact you maximally empower yourself when you, assume the greatest possible responsibility for everything that happens in your context.

So let us put this understanding to work in considering how we can creatively employ the tremendous power of thought to deal with our own thoughts and feelings, e.g. our fears, our tendencies always to impose on situations some judgement, etc. etc. Consider fear. You may be afraid of snakes, afraid of your parents' or partner's temper, afraid of challenging your neighbours, afraid of a nuclear holocaust, or of anything else under the sun. Where does the fear lie? The fear is not out there, it is in your 'head'. The fear of snakes is not in the field, the fearful response is in you, and the persistent disposition of fear is yours, not the snake's, not the field's. Understanding this makes it easy to deal with.

Because if the fear is in our subjective response to a situation and this is to find by a level of emergent feeling and mind, then we can attack the fear directly at its own level, at the level in which it exists, at the level of our thoughts and feelings. Thus next time we go into the field, we imagine we are preceded by a

platoon of snake-beaters with sticks pushing the sheaves of grass aside and clearing the way so that no snake could possibly be there. The fear is not in the field, it is in your mind, and that visualisation will help to reduce the fear in your mind. Or if you are afraid of a neighbour whom you nevertheless have to visit, imagine yourself visiting the neighbour or when you are visiting the neighbour, visit him in a state where you are protected by a suit of armour, and escorted by a phalanx, an army of bodyguards and supporters. If they are there in your mind then they will be there at the source of your fear. And nothing which you did in the physical world could be so immediately effective as operating directly and immediately on the source of the fear itself in your mind. Because to repeat, the fear is not in the neighbour or in his house or on the street as you go to it, it is in your mind.

None of this means of course that you should be foolhardy. The ancient Greeks understood very well that for any virtue there were two vices, thus corresponding to the virtue of bravery is the vice of deficit of fear or cowardice and the vice of excess of foolhardiness. Thus it is foolhardy to actually go into a field which is

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[26] In tackling something like fear, there are two levels of visualisation. The first level is one in which, in a way you still have the fear, but you protect yourself against it, arm yourself with plating or bodyguards or supporting troops or whatever. The second kind of visualisation is where you imagine yourself as without the fear and therefore no longer needing the support of your bodyguards or protectors. You imagine yourself as courageous, as being able to hold your own in any situation, as fearless without being foolhardy. Again there are standard techniques for dealing with this.

One thing to appreciate is that our language and our culture use fanciful imagery as metaphor, and these imageries and metaphors can be exploited in creative visualisation. So the idea of a shining knight in armour, although physically antiquated in fighting today, is nevertheless still powerful in the sort of internal combat that I am talking about here, because and insofar as we think of fights in those ways. Similarly and by the same token, if your mind is full of science fiction, then use spaceships and all the appropriate paraphernalia. It will be effective for you. This point is further emphasised by understanding that all the great religious traditions which thematise war and fighting are talking about an internal war, a war fought within our own minds and embodied personalities. *Jihad*, the Islamic holy war is a war that one wages within one's embodied personality for the victory of the ground-state and what for the devout Muslim

full of snakes; regretfully it would be foolhardy for many women to walk alone in many parts of the big cities of the world. These are objective features of the situation which need to be transformed by our intentional (and collective) agency, so you always act in a sensible and balanced way; and there are situations to avoid and situations to encourage or bring about.[26]

To recapitulate, we have already seen that in normal communication one mind directly reads and affects another, without the mediation of the interpretation of physical stimuli or signals, this is direct mind-to-mind action, albeit action at close physical proximity. Understanding that from the standpoint of self-referentiality, when we feel fear, the fear is for the most part not in the situation, but in our minds, that is in our reaction or response to the situation, we can make creative use of the power of our mind in an active way—e.g. in visualisations designed to counteract the negative effects of emotional states. For example, if we are entering a situation in which our normal subjective reaction is one of fear, then we can imagine ourselves, that is visualise ourselves' in that situation in battle dress (uniform, arms, etc.); if we wish to sever or disconnect a relationship then we may cut with imaginary scissors the string or tie which binds us; if we wish to shut the door on the past, then in our mind we just visualise the slamming or shutting of an oak door on the past, and we have done a huge amount in our minds alone to break with the past, sever the relationship, or protect ourselves. This is only making use of the practice that scientists, artists and designers typically employ when they are imaginatively creating in their minds something they are testing for or are about to produce in physical actuality. Physical action can only be affected in virtue of the pre-existence or simultaneity of conscious thought. The per-

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is his fana or total annihilation in god (the form of self-realisation which it takes in that tradition, for reasons we will go into elsewhere). Similarly the *Bhagavad Gita* does not describe a war between two opposing armies, but a war one fights within oneself for self-realisation and to be maximally efficacious for universal self-realisation, that is for self-realisation everywhere, for its own sake and equally because its absence constrains your freedom as a realised being as much as it does the beings whose unfreedom it is.

tinence of this can be better appreciated if we recognise that physical action alone can only occur in an intentional way with the prior occurrence of such acts, or their implicit presupposition. Thus any physical action, by way of protection, severing or disconnecting must be preceded by some such creative intentional thought process anyway; this is indirect mental action, that is action and from one's mind to one's physical situation. To the extent that the danger or situation one wants to affect is not in the physical circumstances but in one's response or reaction to it, then the focus to that extent can be much more concentrated on one's mind itself. To understand the logic of this one has to understand that the physical world is also pictured in and as a part of one's mental world; so that arming, loving or honouring oneself may also be done by representing or picturing oneself physically in one's mind.

You can practise the power of creative thinking on yourself in lots of different ways, but it would be most useful (just as in the case of say meditation or prayer) if you do so in the context of your everyday life. Thus when you want to close the door on a relationship or episode in your life, you imagine slamming the door shut on it, say seven times, and bolting the door each time you shut it. And you can do that over and over again and that situation will no longer be there. Remember the objective in life is always to be totally clear so that you do not want to carry things with you that are no longer relevant. A story can illustrate this. Two Zen monks were walking when they approached a stream. A beautiful woman came up to them and pleaded for their help in getting across. One monk carried her across the stream in his arms. She was very grateful and the two monks carried on their walk. But the second monk was now in a state of intense agitation. The first monk asked him 'what is wrong?'. And the second monk said to him 'how could you do that? How could you carry that woman like that?' And the first monk said back to him 'are you still carrying the woman—I left her there'.

4. Koans and Ways of Subverting the Egoic Mind

We now move to consider ways in which we can subvert the mind to a position where we can '*unthink*'; and indeed lose our identi-

fication with our mind and ultimately with our ego. The objective is to have a clear mind, which will be an empty and free mind, insofar as everything you know you have made a part of your being and so you do not carry with you in your head. You will then be maximally in a position both to learn something new and to respond without preconceptions to any situation which arises. So a clear mind will be an empty mind, an empty mind, in a way, is no mind (and no mind is also 'don't know' mind—that is mind ready to learn). Therefore understanding the importance of no mind we can begin to appreciate the Zen practice of subverting the mind.

Indeed Zen koans are perhaps the most famous example of stretching so as to subvert the mind. In most cases so as to ultimately replace the **mis-identification** of the student or practitioner of himself, that is his being with his ego, and replace it with an identification of her being in her ground-state.

I will just give three examples of this. A koan is a puzzle which a teacher gives to his student for some specific purpose. Thus the koan 'what is the sound of one hand clapping?' may be given so that the student eventually comes to see that our normal conception that things can be viewed atomistically and separate from each other is false, and that one hand is literally non-sense—since to be (in general), but also in this case specifically a hand, is always to be related, so that we have to think of ourselves and not just our hands as existing inseparably with everything else. The puzzle, what is the meaning of 'the wild geese cast their reflections upon the water, but the water has no mind with which to reflect them', is designed to show that water unlike the mind does not stall or fixate or clutter itself with thought, images or current events, but allows whatever happens to pass freely through it, remaining unattached and oblivious to its flow, reflecting but not recording, dwelling on it, not sticking as things tend to in the mind. The ideal of inner emptiness is the only one appropriate for a neophyte which is to be as clear a channel for the truth and as fluent as the water. The third koan, 'what is your original face?' is designed precisely to drive the apprentice monk or student to despair, until he sees that any face, any self-image is a mask behind which we hide our true identity which is koan. Our true identity is of course our being at our ground-state. This being which we

are is concretely singularised, but also dialectically universal and inseparably connected with all other beings on the cosmic envelope. Whatever you are in your ground-state that will be your original face. Or will it? Face means mask. So what do you think? Or rather unthink.

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We have already looked at some koans. Let us go a bit deeper into the wild geese one: 'the wild geese cast their reflections upon the water, but the water has no mind with which to receive them'. So what this means is basically that our minds as they are constituted now, store, collect, hold impressions, judgements, even names which appear as fixated energy, a stuck grid with which we go about in all our interactions in the world. So we lose our capacity to perceive and act intuitively, responsively, sensitively in full appreciation of the irreducible richness of being. The water remains clear, it holds nothing, but it reflects everything which passes over it. So if there is something you need to learn, understand it in its most essential and widely applicable way, make it part of your being and fold it away. If you need to notice something or you find a tremor of doubt or worry flitting into your mind, don't struggle, don't fight it, just let it float through you and away.

The principle of '*no mind*' may seem strange. But nothing creative ever comes from thought. Creativity, including creativity in thought, comes always from the gap or space between thoughts, from a level beyond thought. Similarly the moment you impose judgement or thought in a situation which calls for loving, spontaneous unconditional giving to the world (including yourself), you will mix, block and dissipate the love that you would give, and in giving experience. So nothing loving ever comes from thought. Nor does any right-action from thought. For thought can never produce action. However much you think, you think yourself into a state of activity, or however arduously you work out how it is that you should optimally act, that thought does not produce action. Actually your thought cannot even produce thought. You cannot think yourself into producing a thought.

You never think a thought as such, a thought is always happening to you. You might think you are in control of your thoughts; but the more you think you are in control of your thoughts, the more your thoughts control you. You are maximally free, acting from the position of your ground-state, and your in-built knowledge and intuitive experience have become one with your innermost being; and then you will be in your dharma, acting joyously, effortlessly, unconditionally, spontaneously and fruitfully.

5. Practising Watchfulness: Just Observing (without Judgement or Thought)

You can practice just looking, observing without judgement, observing other things, observing yourself, your states of consciousness, your feelings and thoughts, your self in activity, without judging anything. Paying attention you will see, observe and understand where it is that things go wrong, in yourself or in a situation or in some other being. Attending to that you will be healing it, either directly in the case of yourself, or indirectly through the mechanisms of reciprocity and co-presence in someone else. Attention or awareness has an enormous energising and healing power. We all know this intuitively. You are standing alone at a party, you feel neglected, lost, like slinking out. Someone else comes up to you and attends, 'What is your name?'. At the first hint of recognition, appreciation, you are bound, taken up into a totality, gradually made to feel part of a coherent whole, you can enjoy and express yourself—you are no longer alienated. Everyone who has parented a child knows that the child's tears or tantrums are mostly resolved just by the act of attending, the act of attending itself will immediately issue in the appropriate action (e.g. the provision of food, entertainment, company, whatever). The truly extraordinary thing is it doesn't matter what you attend to, just the power of attending will bring you into that 'emptiness' or 'suchness', which is the ground-state of your being to which you are attending, whether it is yourself, or some other being, including an artefact you use at work or in play. And then consumed with love, you will be one with the cosmic totality. It will be impossible for you to act in a wrong way, that is a way

inconsistent with your ground-state and your relationship to the ground-states of all other beings. This relationship will always be specific. For the way I act to X will be different to the way I act to Y, insofar as X and Y are unique beings and my relationship to them is differentiated. Thus no-one would imagine that it was sensible to talk to an Eskimo in Japanese. We all know that the right way to treat a person is always in accordance with the specificity of the circumstances and your relationship to them.

There are five steps characteristic of going deeply into something, by way of transcendentally identifying with it. First you will feel love. Second you will achieve an understanding with or of it. Then comes the important phase in which you will heal it (and yourself) and/or, in the way I discussed in Chapter 1, trace or chase it if it is a heteronomy back to the ground-state on which it is parasitic, dissolving or disconnecting it or allowing its reabsorption into the cosmic envelope from which it had strayed. At this point you will experience its emptiness or suchness, its, if you like 'Buddha-nature', its ground-state or the ground-state on which it is based. And finally, in the transcendental identification between your ground-state and its ground-state, you will experience in it, or rather the fusion, sheer bliss, ultimately indeed the bliss-consciousness of being, *sat-chit-anand*, to which arguably everything aspires, and for the sake of (the maximisation of) which anything, rather than nothing, exists. So by way of summary, the steps or levels within transcendental identification are:

1. Love
2. Understanding
3. Healing
4. Emptiness or Suchness
5. Bliss

6. Witnessing

I have already discussed this at some length earlier. But you should continually try to be aware of yourself in your awareness. This is not at first easy to do and you should avoid dualistically splitting your attention. It is easier to practise it neither in moments of

meditation nor in effortful activity. But rather at first in a relatively relaxed or enjoyable activity, say something which expresses your dharma at a relatively low level of intensity. When you are doing something effortlessly and easily and you feel yourself to be totally at one with the situation, then you will gradually find it easy in the context of the total holistic field of your awareness to be aware of your feeling of unity without making that feeling an object distinct from that with which it is one. This is also a very good exercise in losing a sense of your separateness from other things, because it is only when you can see yourself fully in the context of other things, that you will really have severed all links with that ego which would alienate you and cut you off from the rest of being.

Prelude to Chapter Four

So You Think Non-duality is Unusual?—Or, Are You Paying Attention (Listening [to Me, Reader]?)

So you think non-duality is unusual do you? Yes? You've just been in a non-dual state. You think transcendence is for churches, mosques or temples. You've just been transcending—more precisely in a state of transcendental-identification-with-me (or, at least my words). You think co-presence is mystical, or obscure. You've just been co-present with me and I with you. And in that moment of co-presence there was complete mutuality; complete reciprocity.

In that moment of co-presence there was complete singularity and complete universality: neither time nor even space. Time stood still (that moment was eternal) and it was placeless (ubiquitous, everywhere and everywhen).

In that moment of attention there was no gap, opposition or duality between us. In fact, there was no ego, no you as distinct from me or me as distinct from you. So you still think it's unusual to lose, or necessary to cling, to your ego, your separateness from me?

In that moment of attention, moreover, you did not think. There was nothing in your mind. You were not thinking. You had, for that moment at least, no-mind, clear-mind, open-mind, don't-know-mind. You were empty and clear in yourself and your

mind: you let go of your ego and your mind dropped away. Just as you do, as happens every time you watch television, or answer the phone. At one with the events unfolding on the screen, the one at the other end of the line.

Moreover in that moment of attending to the question I asked you, not only did your ego drop away and did you unthink, i.e. not think, even though you were fully aware (in fact just because you were fully aware, conscious, and attentive), you were not angry or irritable, selfish, jealous or possessive, frustrated or bored; you were not attached or averse to anything. You were completely clear emotionally.

Am I making you out to be too good to be true? You listened; you did not judge, gesticulate, classify, stereotype or even name me. You did not throw anything at me. Nor in that moment of pure attentiveness had I, if I had wanted, thrown anything at you. You were secure and free. In that moment of attentiveness you could not hurt, harm or pain me, nor me you.

Am I making you sound god-like? In that moment you were not god, but you had the divine-like quality, for the moment, of non-dual being. You were a non-dual being engaged in a non-dual action. You see, it is not difficult is it?

And unless you were in that state, at least some of the time, you could not do or be anything at all.

Are you really reading this book? Or are you judging it—or me? Do you look at, notice, experience, enjoy and act, have an effect on the world or does the world pass you by? Scaring, scarring you, shuddering down your spine.

Notice too that, in that moment of attention, your moment of reading, listening, hearing, following me, your moment of communion, not just your ego (and your pride), your mind (and your opinions), your emotions (and your position), but your body—yes, your body—dropped away. You lost your aches and pains, your cravings and thirst, the blind tenacity of your belief in the (exhaustive) physicality of being.

And yet still you were you. Fully conscious, alert. Unlumbered by ego, thought, emotion or bodily inertia, you could have immediately swung into action. In that moment, in which you suspended your ego, your judgement, your prejudices and

your clinging, you were free, totally free. And yes, in that moment, for that moment, you were a self-realised being.

Not so difficult is it?

And moreover, being thus is a condition for anything you do at all; and present there as a background to and a condition for all your unrealised states—all those states in which you oppose and fight yourself, your ground-state, in which you are split against yourself, and turn yourself into an alienated, dualistic being and in your pride and fury and because of your desire to belong to a group, sect, party, ideology (to be a materialist, a Marxist, a Mormon—or not a philosopher, not a spiritual person, not a mystic—or to be politically correct, squeaky clean, not clever but smart) you think you already know what you feel about this book.[1]

Notice now, how, when you don't attend, when you already know, when you think so-and-so has 'sold out' or whatever, you split immediately, in that moment of judgemental inattention, not just yourself but our common, lovely world. When you are pitting yourself against me one part of the cosmic envelope which binds us all against another, an orchid against a rose, you immediately split yourself too. When you are angry, cross with me, you cannot be one with yourself, not now (only) because I am with you, but because your mood or judgement or opinion or label splits you from your own being. Your anger tears you apart. You feel you have to defend yourself, your positions, your belief, your cause; you resist yourself and in that resistance you split and enfeeble yourself. This is truly dangerous, for in that condition you can swallow the greatest lies and be subject to the most horrendous oppression. To be safe, to be secure, to be assertive, you need to get back into a non-dual state.

In your act of attention, in your listening, you are not split, you are one and whole. And you are then free to, as we say, 'make up your own mind'. Once you get into the habit of listening, of observing, of unthinking, non-opinionating, non-sounding-off,

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[1] Someone wrote on the internet: I am disgusted! I haven't actually read Bhaskar's latest book, but this has never stopped me expressing my opinions before and it won't stop me now. Yes, this time he's really done it. He's sold out: betrayed us.

non-judging, you are in an excellent position to learn, grow and develop. If you already know something before you read, look or hear, or you have made up your mind (and you will always find there, when you are in such a state, what it is that you want to find), then you might as well close your ears and shut your eyes. There is no point looking, reading, or enjoying the experience of life.

If you truly attend, then you will discover, you will create, re-create, co-create. As you become more non-dual in your habits and ways of being, more unsplit, self-consistent in your being and life, you become more open to learn, to enjoy and to act. Because you do not already 'know' before the unique moment in which you can learn (and every moment is so unique) and because you have not already decided what to do before the very moment in which you have to act (and every moment is such a moment), when that moment arises you can learn more truly and act more rightly and enjoy your creativity and sensitivity/sensibility much more.

Are you listening to me? If you say 'no', you are. So we will go on. When you are attending, you are no longer trying to manipulate, control, force—or even liberate or 'save' someone else. (You love them too much for that—you want them to, and you know that only they can, 'save themselves'.) You are not using other people or other beings generally. In other words you are in touch with your love, at the ground-state of your being, on the cosmic envelope that connects us all.

Do you think that you don't love? If you do so think, you deceive and split yourself. It is love that holds you, society and the rest of creation together. Read on.

Do you think that you are not creative? What ingenuity you put into that belief! What creative energy sustains it!

Do you think that you are without talent? Too old, too ill, too hungry, too poor? 'He that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath'. Yes—for as long as you own or have something, whether it be your car, your partner or your (sense of) poverty, you cannot be whole, undivided, one. You will always be split between what you are, and what you own, possess, present as yours to the world. So—this is a strange but true thing

to say—give up your poverty and you will be free. And abundant. And incidentally, in all probability but without certainty, on your way to being rich in the way you presently perceive yourself to be poor.

Do you think you are not special, unique? Who is feigning non-uniqueness? Isn't that strange that you alone, of all people, think that you are not special, and that you afford yourself this privilege, this aloofness, this differentiation, from the rest of being, where no two tigers ever have the same stripes or markings and no two peas are ever exactly alike.

Perhaps you are feeling uncomfortable. At least you are feeling, and in this feeling, you are one. But probably you are right: this prelude has gone on too long and so I will stop.

Chapter Four

The Tao of Love and Unconditionality in Commitment

When you love you should not say: 'God is in my heart' but rather 'I am in the heart of God'.
And think not you can direct the course of love, for love, if it finds you unworthy, directs your course.
Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself. But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:

To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.
To know the pain of too much tenderness.
To be wounded by your own understanding of love; and to bleed willingly and joyfully.
To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstacy;
To return home at even tide with gratitude.

—Khalil Gibran, 'Speak to Us of Love'
(*The Prophet*)

Section 1: Orientations on Love

Consider some pregnant questions about love:

> 'What is it that you love? (Think about different kinds of love.)'
> 'How is love connected to an ideal of unity or union?'
> 'What is your conception of such a union?'
> 'Why am I no longer in love?'
> 'What difference does being in love make to me?'
> 'Do I love myself as much as my partner/parents/friends/God—if not why not?'
> 'What do I understand by love?' or 'What is my idea of love?'
> 'What would be (for me) a state of perfect love?'
> 'How much autonomy would the loved one have in such a state?'
> 'How many social relationships and practices are motivated by love and how many by desire, fear, greed, jealousy or other emotions?'
> 'To what extent do these other relationships and practices (not motivated by love) nevertheless depend on love—e.g. in the way in which a war depends on the solidarity of the fighting soldiers at the front and the sustenance of the wives, mothers and sisters at home?'

Here we may also like to reflect on the different varieties of love: e.g. personal; civic; ethical/moral; cosmic/spiritual. And also to the difference between conditional and unconditional love: this may be illustrated by reference to market or contractual relations, which are driven by desire or other motives (and insofar as love is involved are constituted by conditional love). Whereas conditional love is karmic, clinging or binding the lover (and potentially the loved one) to the world of attachment and in the ancient Vedic and also Buddhist way of thinking to the cycle of death and re-birth, unconditional love liberates us from this. In this way unconditional love, which can also be related to unconditionality in reasoning (more generally in thought, word and action), is dharmic, rather than karmic.

We may also like to reflect a little bit here on the characteristic phenomenology of love. In love we transcend our lower phenomenal or everyday selves; we become more energised, greater and nobler than we normally are. This accessing of our higher or essential selves makes it possible for us to act more spontaneously, rightly, creatively, compassionately, tolerantly than we normally do. So understanding the phenomenology of love gives us the clue to the resolution of the deep-seated alienation characteristic of the contemporary world; and presages a world in which 'the free development of each would be a condition for the free development of all'. For love is not engulfing, stifling or in any way uniform.

To what extent do you have a conception in which the other, or the object of love, is itself in a process of self-expansion or fulfilment?

Thus, on the state of perfect union (as exemplified by marriage):

> *Love one another, but make not a bond of love;*
> *let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.*
> *Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.*
> *Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of life can contain your hearts.*
> *And stand together yet not too near together:*
> *For the pillars of the temple stand apart,*
> *and the oak tree and the cypress tree grow not in each other's shadow.*
>
> —Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Do you stand to whom or that which you love as an oak to a cypress? In neither's shade? Love is concretely singularised to its specific objects and there is no reason why, even if we loved everyone (or indeed everything in the universe) unconditionally, we should all love them in the same way.

'The world has long since had a dream of something of which it needs only to become conscious for it to possess in reality . . . to obtain forgiveness for its sins mankind need only declare them for what they are' (Marx). Do you have such a dream? Yes or no, we could all readily accept that if a dream or ideal was to become a reality what we would have would be harmony and peace in generalised four-dimensional (or four-planar) social space.

Peace and harmony is, at any rate, a kind of criterion for alethic truth. Thus if one has accessed the voice within, which is at one with the envelope outside, then one is going to find an overwhelming sense of subjective peace, harmony and fulfilment, which one will seek to carry over, in loving acts designed to bring harmony in the outside world. This is the way from inner peace to outer peace.

Love is the totalising, binding, unifying, healing force in the universe. And, just in virtue of there being a 'universe' (one-verse), it is the most powerful force in being. Fear, and all the other negative emotions, depend on the absence or incompleteness of love. Thus the negative emotions, such as greed and anger, all depend on self-alienation, an alienation of self from Self, of personality from alethic truth. Most obviously opposed to love is fear, possibly the most basic negative emotion. Thus we have ego-attached emotions stich as pride and object-attached emotions such as greed. Fear and desire are, in a certain sense, mutually presupposing/entailing, for desire seeks to fill the inner emptiness of the soul, the e-vacuation of Self from soul, but the insecurity experienced by the loss of self is primary and a condition for the object-attachment that fuels desire.

Self-love (self-esteem) is primary or basic and a condition for love of others (other beings), a practical condition for altruism; and the condition under which, we will come to see (in the next chapter), the primary social act is the gift.

Any negative emotion (depending on an absence or incompleteness of love) is a superstructure/TINA formation parasitic on love; and as such it is linked to the heteronomous and irrealist ensemble that I have already analysed. It is important to see that conditional, false, selfish, possessive, clinging, oppressive, forms of love are nevertheless forms of love. A close analysis of

them, as well as emotional states which are given a more obviously 'non-loving' declension such as anger, hatred, etc., shows that they all depend on and presuppose some rudimentary form of love, which is there as their alethic condition (and tacit presupposition). And, as such, there is a potential to be developed which will eventually flower, at an individual level, in cosmic or supramental states of consciousness and at a social level in what I have called eudaimonistic society.

The emotions are perhaps the suppressed term of philosophical discourse par excellence (at least once we have accepted the need for ontology and an ontology which includes human beings)—characteristically squeezed out between the terms of mind-body dualism. The emotions mediate all agency-action on the world and all perception-reaction to the world. Quite literally the emotions are the mediating factor in all human life.[1] Then, the emotions are vital in considering issues of self- (including of course spiritual) development. For negatively the emotions block self-awareness, experience and agency; while positively, accessing, channelling and appropriately using them, they facilitate and accompany self-expansion. For we have seen that the goal of life, articulated philosophically around the theme of enlightenment or maximal reflexivity, for example in the state of 'cosmic consciousness', is precisely to stabilise the transcendental or real self in the personality. This stabilisation is what enlightenment means. Its prerequisite is the shedding of all that we are not. Thus:

> *The way of love is not*
> *a subtle argument.*
>
> *The door there is devastation*
>
> —Jelalludin Rumi

[1] Note also the sense in which nothing can be done or felt or experienced without the emotions—they are literally the driving force, the e-motivating factor, in human life, and mediate both:
(a) mind and bodily action; and
(b) the embodied personality and the world outwith her.

Unless and until I can use in a free and controlled way my mental, emotional and physical being (or aspects of being) then I will never be able to stabilise my self or soul in my daily activity.

Energy

In the Preface I contrasted fixated or stuck energy, which acts as a block or otherwise disperses, dissipates or drains our free creativity, and free or unbound energy, the infinite potential of our unlimited selves.

Why is life so difficult? Why shouldn't it be effortless, easy, spontaneous? Sometimes it appears to be. In what way do you re-energise yourself. Do you think this is applicable to all people (would it be the same for instance for your partner?)? How do you conserve energy? What do you consider to be a waste of energy? To what extent do you think of the world in energetic–dispositional terms?[2]

Our task is to transform fixated, bound, attached (either to the ego and/or to the object [these are the two main sources of attachment]) to unbound, free energy, i.e. to engage in a negentropic practice or transformation, that is, in a way, to reverse the second law of thermodynamics.

Thus let us consider the following seven norms or values:

Truth
Freedom (Power)
Love
Abundance
Life [and what is life-supporting or enhancing]
Bliss, joy
Light

—which transform at a psychological and sociological level into the simpler, or more familiar, concepts of peace, harmony, fulfilment and realisation.

[2] It is worthwhile at this point to begin to see that there is a natural transition from a dispositional to an energetic to an enchanted world view, as will become clear later on.

Each of these norms or values embody **specific forms of energy**. Let us look at them in their negative forms. We have:

Ignorance (cf. avidya, caused or induced by maya or the veil of illusion);
Servitude, oppression or heteronomy
Fear and the other negative emotions (which all depend on the absence or incompleteness of love)
Poverty (absence or incompleteness of abundance)
Death, dis-ease, ill-health (-being),[3] disabilities, ailments
Unhappiness, misery, suffering[4] which will include of course all the other ills[5]
Disharmony, imbalance, strife.

All are or depend upon the absence, or incompleteness, of the corresponding values or norms listed above.

What is it, then, that if we are in our essential reality, our alethic, free, abundant, loving, vital, blissful, harmonious selves, that we need to lose, to give up, to surrender?;[6] that we need to reclaim our birthright? What is it that we need to come home?

The first thing to note is that what it is that we need to lose (or what it is that we need to acquire in order to lose) in this process is nothing intrinsic to or inherent in our situation or circumstances; it is fundamentally, or at least most fundamentally, something in our attitude or response to them. This is the standpoint of subject-referentiality. Our task is to transcend circumstances or situations [here] so that we can become free, that is can act from a dharmic standpoint, so helping to transform not only our own situation but the situations of everyone.

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[3] That is a lack of wholeness or incompleteness which includes not just the absence of an element, but imbalance, i.e. lack of correct proportion or relationship within the elements of an internally related (holistically, causally, interactive) totality.

[4] Refer Marx's aphorism, echoing that of Buddha (and indeed the Vedic tradition generally), that 'to sense is to suffer'.

[5] In this way the absence or incompleteness of one value entails or induces a corresponding absence or incompleteness of the others; and correspondingly with their complete forms.

[6] See again the theme of *yagya*—as the condition and means for yoga, or union with one's essential self, or godhead.

Section 2: Excursus On Unconditionality In Love

1. Why do we seek love? Is it because we are lonely? How is love connected to loneliness,[7] and more generally to the longing for completion, as is suggested by the theme of dialectic, and in particular the Buddha's dialectic of *dukka* or lack.

2. Why should we love? The important point to realise here is that we cannot help but love; the only variables are the form and direction which our love takes. We are going to love anyway, insofar as love underpins all our emotions and forms the emotional ground-state quality which binds or coheres all our activities and all forms of social life.

3. Can't we then not be 'emotional'? In one sense we can be unemotional, that is the sense in which we are, so to speak, emotionally clear; in which, one might say, one is in control of one's emotions—but probably this is a misleading way of putting it, because any talk of control is already setting up a moment of heteronomy, force or external constraint on what should be the free expression of one's being in one's ground-state in interaction with the world (and in this interaction the emotions play a crucial mediating role, just as they do in the transaction between our minds and our bodies). But in another, more basic sense, we cannot be non-emotional, that is the sense in which all our behaviour and activity will be, insofar as it is intentional and oriented to action, at its most basic level, physical objectification in the world, then all our activity will be e-motivated, directed, charged in an e-valuative, animated, vital, sentient way. We cannot not be emotional beings, any more than we cannot not be physical beings. Love is just the most basic characterisation of our emotional being, in its purest, ground-state form. So there is yet further sense, then, in which we could say that love is *not* an emotion, but the ground (or source) of our emotions; and in this sense, then, we

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[7] *Eleanor Rigby picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been,*
Lives in a dream,
Waits at the window, wearing a face that she keeps in a jar by the door.
Who is it for?
All the lonely people, where do they all come from? (John Lennon and Paul McCartney)

can be free, empty, clear of emotions—just as I argue in the last chapter we can be of thought—and so be able to act (intentionally and so e-motivationally) in a way which expresses, optimally, the ground-state quality of love.

4. So if we cannot help but love, and we cannot help but be emotional, in the sense of manifesting or expressing feeling or emotion in our life, why then do I talk about unconditional love? In what way is unconditional love, as distinct from love which is mediated or mixed with some condition, such as a contract or exchange or a tit-for-tat, necessary? Because the only love worthy of the name is in fact unconditional love, which does not mean to say that love (i.e. unconditional love) is not present when the love shown also contains, as a mediated, mixed, compromised or TINA formation, some other emotion besides love. It is merely to say that the love in conditional love is unconditional love and the conditional component in the mixed emotion or quality is something else, such as jealousy, fear or pride, with which that unconditional love is meshed; so that the net effect is in a way the taking back of some of the (unconditional) love which you have been giving.

5. Love does not mean or specify any form of fixed behaviour. In fact love, as the emotional ground-state quality, will be consistent with an enormous variety of specific forms of activity and behaviour, specific acts. One cannot say from the nature of the act itself whether it is an act of love or not; that can only be shown by an analysis of what lies behind it and whether it is an appropriate manifestation of love in those particular circumstances. Thus love will always be concretely singularised and specific according to its objects. One does not show love by treating a dog in the same way as a cat or a parrot—or one's car; similarly how I express love to a stranger will be different from how I express it to a friend; and how I express love to someone with whom I am in intellectual correspondence will be different again from how I express it to a dependent child in my care. So love is consistent with 'toughness'; and as such, it may depend on its fortification with other complementary virtues of the ground-state, such as courage, the capacity for single-pointedness and concentration. It is particularly important here to see that love, although the great

unifying, tying, binding force in life, is consistent with separation, de-totalisation, disunion, divorce, all of which may be necessary for the greater totality that one is building. Therefore, for example, one cannot say a priori in the name of love whether a relationship should continue or discontinue. All that one can say is that the right answer will only come to the person who has a clear mind, a pure heart and, insofar as he or she must undertake the right-action physically, a healthy body to affect it.

6. Love means, depends upon, loving yourself. You can only *give* as much as you have. And if you *have* neglected yourself, your own powers and needs, then you will not be able to give very much love to anyone else. Therefore self-esteem and assertiveness are not the least of the virtues. What does it mean to be assertive? What it means is that you can act (mindfully or mindlessly, i.e. spontaneously) in the right way in the right circumstances. The capacity to assert yourself in the world is a natural consequence of an expanded personality. Moreover, although the personality will have to shed its ego for it to become fully empowered, there will often be times when the embodied personality is so battered, shrivelled, frazzled by life that it has *no sense of itself*, let alone a sense of its own distinctiveness or separateness from other beings. Then its own sense of self, and sense of its own self-worth will have to be carefully nurtured, like a delicate plant, so that the ego is actually fostered, as the growing personality comes to see itself apart from the world which has been against it. This is the moment of 'sublative', as distinct from 'transformative', spirituality.

7. Although love is consistent with many different forms of action, and can be expressed in an infinity of number of ways, there are various conventional categorisations—which range from erotic, romantic, familial, civic through to ethical and spiritual modalities. I prefer to think in terms of five radiating circles of love. When you are in one circle this will almost inevitably take you into other circles. These circles are the circle of love for yourself; for another human being; for the totality of other human beings; for the totality of other beings in creation; and for the source or sustaining power in creation itself, most customarily known as god.

Engagement in any circle of love will take you to the point when you just are love; and when you are in love with love itself. This is a very common experience, for the lover to find that his or her love for the beloved passes naturally into a tremendous love for love, and this love for love takes the lover into the space where they want love with the source ultimately of all love; love or union with the source of all union. This extraordinary fact, that love does not have to refer to anything outside itself, gives it a self-sufficiency or self-justifying character sui generis. But love nominates only the ground-state quality of one aspect of our embodied personality. So love, no matter how intense, can be blind, or stupid. Being full of love, being in our ground-state, we will only tend (*ceteris paribus*) to be spontaneously right-acting. We need to also be energised, intelligent, creative, aware, etc.; for these we need to develop our minds, bodies, sense of integrity and will, etc. To put this in another perspective you could be an extremely clever and creative criminal, employing your creativity without heart, in an emotional vacuum. We all know such unbalanced beings. At the end of the day you have to shed all aspects of your personality, in each of its layers or dimensions, which are inconsistent with your ground-state; and, insofar as you have been unbalanced or neglected one aspect to the detriment of the others, then you will need to consciously fill the vacuum you have created in your shedding or emancipatory practice so the ground-state qualities can grow in your embodied personality. Always remember that your ground-state is like the parent to the child of your embodied personality; and we cannot expect a child either intellectually or emotionally (any more than physically) to go from the ages of four to sixteen overnight. What this means is that all of the four traditional yogas are necessary:

Jnana Yoga—the path of wisdom;
Bhakti Yoga—the path of love or devotion;
Hatha Yoga—the path of physical strength or grace; and
Karma Yoga—the path of action or service.

8. Love is not the same as desire. But if you want something, then the best way to get it is to become like what you

want—for like attracts like and by becoming what you want two things will happen:

(a) you will no longer be dependent on something outside yourself, as in a peculiar way you now provide from within yourself what you wanted from outside yourself; and
(b) being what you now are, you will anyway spontaneously attract that which you want.

This is particularly important when it comes to the question of what is called 'grace', or the question of what is called the 'guru'. At the right point, the right time, you will be resonating a vibration or quality which will be attuned to that of the help you need. So it is absolutely no accident that the right grace, guru or support (or opportunity) appears at exactly the right time, for it is when you have worked on yourself to the point where you are attuned (and so attract) precisely that which you need.

9. The ultimate grace will be the love of the source of all love, the source of all love or the totality, customarily called god; and such love will be endless. Therefore when you feel love, as the motto at the beginning of this chapter says, do not say 'God is in my heart', but 'I am in the heart of God'. Now what if you feel that you cannot love? The first thing to realise is that it is not possible not to love. It is your love which explains why you have that particular predicament which you feel. When you go into that predicament, then you will see that you have been loving all along, but loving in such a tangled way that you have never (up to now) been able to realise it. That realisation or act of realisation will be a release or letting go of the feeling that you cannot love; in ceasing to feel that you cannot love, you will feel yourself loving; and in loving, you will be loved. The most important thing to feel love, that is to be in touch with your love, and the way it is being used (or abused), is to let go, surrender, shed to the love that you essentially are. Like all processes of liberation or shedding, this will often involve difficult work. You may ask: 'is it worthwhile?' What you need to consider is the amount of energy that you are spending on hiding or concealing or disguising your unconditional and beautiful and joyous and caring (including self-caring) love from yourself.

10. One way in which to see that love underpins or manifests itself in every form of social life is just to see that any transcendental identification in consciousness is presaged upon, that is presupposes an act of love. Indeed in its very being it constitutes an act of love and pursued consistently and concertedly through to the end you will love that with which you identify. When you love that with which you identify there will be no gap between you and what you identify with. But neither will there be any gap between you, what you identify with and love itself, that is with the supreme binding or cohering force in the universe. If the original alienation within the human being is the split or inconsistency between his or her ground-state and her embodied personality, then the re-unification, or healing of that split, allows the embodied personality to flower, self-consciously flourish, self-consciously as the expression of the ground-state; and the occlusion and domination by what is inconsistent with the ground-state is no more. But this domination and occlusion was only sustained by the energy and qualities of the ground-state. Similarly when (not if) the force of love in the universe triumphs over the forces of hate, anger, etc. that are contrary to it, these opposed forces will merely find themselves to be split-off or alienated parts of the totality which they were occluding or dominating. They have turned the force of their love against themselves! So love, in overcoming fear or division, merely returns to itself, that very self which was sustaining, cohering in a totality the fear or divisiveness or alienation that rent it apart, but as one whole.

11. Love is not only the heart of the way; in a way, it *is* the way, the path to self-realisation (although work on all the other aspects of the embodied personality are essential). For the e-motivating, empowering, energising force in all this work will be the intention to make the self whole and free and expanded so as to fulfil its own dharma or basic nature, which will always be not just to love itself but to love and orient itself to the realisation of all other beings in the universe. And love as the principle of unity, as a principle of unity and identification, will form a crucial part in the philosophy of metaReality which, opposed to traditional philosophies stressing non-identity and duality, emphasises the

priority of non-duality, identity, identification and unity (and therefore love) as a condition of everything dual, divided and alienated in being.

Section 3: Love and the Emotions: General Theoretical Introduction

1. The philosophy of metaReality is a philosophy of non-duality; of identity, identification, of unity and unification. Thus it is above all a philosophy of love, since love is the great unifying force in the world (at least the conscious social), and arguably the universe. There is only a fine difference between unity and identity, because all unity has to embody an aspect of identity and at the same time, at least on the philosophy of metaReality, all identities are themselves rich and differentiated wholes. The philosophy of metaReality is therefore a philosophy of love. Philosophies of non-identity, including critical realism, reflect the world of duality and relative reality. This is a world governed by principles of difference and change, that is, above all by various principles of attraction and repulsion.

Within relative reality, the world of duality, it is dualism and demi-reality, producing alienation and split which dominates; and it is the dominance of the causally efficacious false which the dominant irrealist philosophies reflect. As reflecting the world of demi-reality, of dualism, contradiction and split, they reflect a world dominated by alienation, hate and other negative emotions. And as such they could therefore be said to be philosophies of hate, fear, pride, anger or whatever. Critical realism, insofar as it digs deep down into the structures of relative reality, can be liberating, within the bounds of relativity and duality, so therefore it is certainly a philosophy of emancipation and freedom, but the liberation it speaks of will always be limited without an understanding of its alethic, absolute, non-dual grounds and conditions of possibility.

2. Insofar as the philosophy of metaReality is a philosophy of identity and unity, then, I have said, it is a philosophy of love. Love is indeed something very basic and important to being, including human being. And when we are talking in the framework

of a philosophy of (meta-)Reality, since we know the totality of our existing world is characterised by pretty violent non-identity, alienation, contradiction and split, we will be looking for the category mistakes which underpin it. For on the categorial realism motivated in Chapter 2, Section 3, I argued that categories and categorial errors are constitutive of reality. And here, on a philosophy of (rich, differentiated, complex, holistic, developing) identity which metaReality is, we will be looking for those categorial errors which are above all **mis-identifications**, those basic mistakes in our ways of being and doing in the world which, whether we are conscious of them or not, structure our current existence. So the kind of mis-identifications we are concerned with here are those mis-identifications which have to do with your desires and cravings, your attachments and aversions, your conditionalities and contractual or monetary exchanges, those things in your life to which you attach value (value being that feature which is most characteristic of the feeling or emotional aspect of our being, as meaning is that which is most characteristic of the mental aspect). Or you may mis-identify with a problem or an issue, a relationship or a role, which you think is what constitutes your being.

3. A key central concept here is the concept of what I will call the **loop** of **love**, which shows love and the emotions as a double mediation. They mediate on the one hand mind and body, and on the other hand our embodied personalities and the world. So that we have, on the one hand, ideas as e-motionally or e-motivated dependent responses to the world; and actions as the (objectification of) emotionally-dependent ideas. In fact this loop could be further extended so that emotions are seen as not only the crucial mediators between mind and body and embodied personality and the world, but as the crucial mediators between embodied personalities and all the dimensions of four-planar social being, at once something out there that we have not created and at the same time in here, something inherent and adhesive which we daily reproduce (or transform).

The somatic or embodied nature of emotions means that the job of clearing negative emotions from our embodied personality places a higher premium on our **body-awareness** than

say mental clearing does. If you have an excessive worry, you may develop a headache; if you have great sadness, you may experience a pain in your heart; a sudden intuition may be experienced as a gut-feeling, literally. So sensitivity to what your body is telling you and the flow of your inner body energy field, the circulation along meridians and distribution and storage of your *chi*, and the awareness of any blockages or build-ups, say around those energy centres which are called *chakras*, becomes very important. And, in emotional clearing, bodily exercises from mindful walking to practices such as Kum Nye, Tai Chi or Hatha Yoga may often be essential complements to your inner-work, part of your *'work-in'*.

4. Love then is essential to all aspects of non-duality. Let us see how this formally works. We have got three modalities, characteristic mechanisms and evolutionary forms of non-duality. Let us take first the three mechanisms. Transcendental identification is the most basic, but also the weakest form: it expresses love in the sense of unity or becoming one. Without it we could do nothing at all in the social world or indeed even as isolated beings in a material context. Reciprocity is a more charged, dynamic, propulsive form of unification. While co-presence is the strongest of them all.

Consider now the three modalities in which non-duality plays a role in our life. The superficial level in terms of which our daily life is constituted and reconstituted through transcendental retreat, identification, agency and holistic teamwork again represents a relatively weak, though basic and elementary, form of love. Now when we move to the level in which non-duality is the basis or fount of everything in the world of duality, that is the level of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope, we are dealing with a very deep and basic form of love. For at the level of your ground-state, your being is constituted fundamentally and essentially by love. It is love at the level of your ground-state which coheres or binds you to the ground-states of all other beings and to the ground-state of your embodied personality which is, so to speak, its representative in the relative world of duality. In a moment I will show that love is the most basic constituent of being and that ultimately there is only one source and dynamic of love.

Turning now to the third way in which non-duality is manifest and underpins the world of duality, that is, as its fine structure or deep interior. Here again love plays a major role. For delving into this deep interior, through our power of pure awareness or observation (that is observation without judgement or emotional disturbance), we manifest, identify and bring out in the object of awareness itself love, which in this way acts as the most healing and transformative agency that there is. For it potentially dissolves (as we have seen in Chapter 1) heteronomies, ills and constraints which block or dissipate the ground-state qualities of pure intentionality, energy, intelligence, creativity, bliss, right-action, the capacity to fulfil our intentionality and above all, love, which binds all these and other ground-state qualities together and makes them whole.

Consider now the three most basic evolutionary mechanisms. *Attraction*, including resonance, is a strong force of unification and re-unification, and therefore of pacifying, healing and love itself. It is important here to stress that unification always allows and entails variety and differentiation, and that love is insistent upon the autonomy and concrete singularity of the objects it unites and heals. The second evolutionary mechanism is *synthesis*, or transcendence, in the sense of the production within the evolutionary process of a new gestalt or totality, or even species. This depends on the awakening of something implicit, in virtue of enfolded co-presence, within the being, group or species concerned, an awakening which will take it to a new threshold or level of accomplishment and development. The final evolutionary mechanism is that *of economy*, in virtue of which, utilising the principle of least effort, which characterises action from the ground-state, evolutionary potentials gel in a synchronicitous way through the infinite correlations of, so to speak, the cosmic computer to produce a qualitative leap or jump. Generally the more you are grounded in your ground-state, the faster and more economically (that is with the least expenditure of energy, i.e. operating as much as possible from a position of maximum negentropy or unbound energy—the true rationale of inner emptiness = clarity = coherence), you will grow.

5. Love then is essential to all aspects of non-duality; it informs all the different yogas or gnoses or forms of union; and love is precisely the principle of union behind all unions without which nothing could cohere. Thus in Jnana Yoga we are concerned with the identification of (and so union with) the alethic truth of the object of knowledge. And without some love for the object you want to know you will never know it. Love transforms, heals, expands, re-unites, de-alienates. All de-alienation actually turns ultimately on love. When you become whole and shed an imbalance or heteronomy, then the greatest force for this de-alienation is the dissolving or re-balancing power which love has on the heteronomous or unbalanced element. In fact it is not difficult to show that anything which is not bound by love or does not contain love or does not have an ingredient of love within it cannot coexist in the same totality as love. Thus it is love which is the ingredient that connects all the elements of the cosmos into one cosmic whole. So if there is an element in the cosmos which does not contain love as an ingredient once the power of love is turned on it, it must eventually fall out of being in the cosmos, that is dissolve, disconnect or otherwise disappear. In fact just as there is a unilateral relationship of dependency between the negative emotions generally and love, in that fear, pride, etc. could not survive without love but love could survive without them, so the two basic forces of attraction and repulsion are equally asymmetrically related, in that in any totality or whole (even an alienated one) the forces of attraction must always be greater or outweigh the forces of repulsion, otherwise the totality will dissolve, flee, fly apart or cease to hold.

This can be put this in a Machiavellian way by saying that if you want to manipulate or control someone you have to love them a bit, however deviously. Otherwise there is nothing to bind the two of you together. On the other hand, with that little bit of love, you could do without that manipulation. Then you would both expand and flourish and possibly a good relationship between the two of you would develop. So negative emotions such as hate and fear are unilaterally dependent on love; and repulsion unilaterally dependent on attraction. What of course happens in

the case where a negative emotion is dominant is that you must expend much more of your ground-state energy and love in sustaining that negative emotion than if you, so to speak, let go and just express the love without mediation. Because you have to sustain it by love anyway. We produce a cloud or vapour and then complain we cannot see, as when we produce a negative emotion.

6. What is the relationship then between the ground-state and the embodied personality? How do we conceptualise this? The ground-state must be conceived as parenting the embodied personality, watching it grow subtly, so to speak, prompting or allowing the diverse play of sublative or self-esteem building and transformative or ego-ridding spirituality. So the ground-state parents the embodied personality and the embodied personality of course parents an inner child and may, as embodied, parent, in the sense of carry, or care for a child of her own, with its own inner child, etc. So actually parenting is a very interesting process, entirely dependent on the subtle play, at various levels and in various ways, of recursively embedded love.

7. Love then is the great expanding, developing and empowering force in the universe. The more love you have the stronger you will be, the more coherent, the more integrated, the more whole. When we for example engage in transcendental identification in consciousness, we not only unite in our consciousness in a non-dual mode in the form of our consciousness, but in its content, and this content, in order to transmit a meaning or evoke a response, must come, so to speak, packaged with love. Because love is inherently attractive, the more love you have the more love you will attract. And the more love you give the more love you will get. But it is more subtle than this because *loving is a no-lose situation*. When you give love, you become more love and even if you receive no love back, you *are* still more love than you were before. If you receive some love back, then you are even more love. Love thus in a way embodies the very principle of economy. The more love you give necessarily the more love you will get. In loving you can never lose, only gain.

When you are in love, you end up loving love. Phenomenologically, most people experience this, whatever the object of their

love, they have the feeling of being in love with love. When you dive down to your ground-state, free of negative emotions, then you are totally and just love. When you love, from your ground-state, some other being's ground-state, then we have a situation in which *love is loving love*. So *in loving, you can never lose.*

How then is love related to some of the other principles promoting realisation? Imbued with love, you will experience maximum coherence and strength, maximum coherence means maximum clarity, and maximum clarity, involving maximum light, translucence, radiance, no deviation or distortion, is that state of maximum emptiness which I have argued (along of course with the Taoist and other traditions) we need to be in if we are to be maximally free. So *love*, which is the great theme of the Christ's teaching, *coherence* possibly the main theme of the Vedic tradition, *clarity* possibly that of the Buddha, and *emptiness* the Taoist norm, flow intrinsically into each other. And note that all these qualities must be *unconditional.* For if you place a condition on love you thereby take some of it back and thereby lose some of your own love, and become less of what you are, diminish yourself. Moreover, in placing a condition on love, you automatically impose a constraint on yourself, and so on the coherence of your action; and instead of being clear you become cloudy and murky. There is now something there, a block on the free expression of the ground-state you essentially are, obscuring the ease of your action and the scope of your vision.

8. Then what should you love? In fact *only* if your love is for the ground-state of your lover will your love succeed. Because if you love something other than that, then there are two possibilities:

(1) either what you love about him is consistent with his ground-state, but then his embodied personality may well develop in a way also consistent with his ground-state, but one which you do not love; or it is even possible that if it is not firmly implanted in his ground-state, that he will develop a quality which is inconsistent with his ground-state in his own journey through life (leading into the second possibility); and/or

(2) that what you love about him is inconsistent with his ground-state, that is, it involves some heteronomy or block or constraint on the love that he can express or reflect back to you, and of course this will not only impede his love for you, but will block and drag back that directness of union of unions which is love loving love, which would otherwise occur if it was you from your ground-state loving him from his ground-state; and in that situation you can indeed lose, in the sense that your love, that is the love which is you, your ground-state, may grow less, come to be less full than it would have been if you had chosen some other object of love.

In fact there is only one object that you can really love, and that is the *divine ingredient* in the ground-state of the one you love, a divine ingredient which may well and indeed will normally be different from that divine ingredient which is your love for him. So when you realise that what you really love is the divine or immanent god in your beloved, then you will soon appreciate that *what you love is god*, and that *god is actually the only thing you can love*. Because ultimately the love at the ground-state of the thing or being that you love is or must be that most ultimate and basic ingredient which is most full of love, which is precisely at the level of the cosmic divine or totality, concretely singularised in some way.

So do you think you have another love besides god? You mis-identify your love if you think that in loving a being you can love something other than god. However, if you think you can love god, without loving the totality of other beings, then you are equally mistaken. For there is no god that you can love which is not ingredient or does not depend on the ground-state of the totality of all other beings.

So love itself embodies a drive to totality. That means that once you love anything, you must ultimately be set on a dialectic in which you must unconditionally love the totality of all beings, albeit in ways which are specific to the concrete singularity of the relationship you have to them. This does not qualify the unconditionality of your love, but merely qualifies the form in which you express it, i.e. your behaviour.

The drive to totality is there on the other paths as well. Because if you follow the path of knowledge where the norm is truth and you know less than the whole, leaving something out, you will be in error. For your omission will inevitably generate a contradiction which will sooner or later become apparent. Similarly on the path of Karma Yoga, unless your work is dedicated to the totality of all beings, you will err in your practice, again yielding an incompleteness, resulting in a failure in what you strive for. A single person in a society founded on eudaimonistic principles, such as the free development of each is a condition of the free development of all, can undermine that society completely.[8]

So being full of love (truth or service) on the cosmic envelope, how can you tell whether someone else is full of love (truth or service)? Well, you observe and in pure observation you will be and so give love. If what you get back is an insult or a lie, then of course it may not have been intended and you observe, and so love, further. Eventually a lie or a neglect will expose itself to you in the absence of the peace and wholeness that you should feel as a being of pure unbounded love. If every time you put your hand in the fire you feel pain, then sooner or later you know something is wrong. In fact no heteronomy, whether it be cognitive, emotional or practical, can withstand the scrutiny and power of love.

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[8] Similarly, in the case of the path of Hatha Yoga, full embodiment of the principle of love must be practised because if you do not love any aspect of your embodiment you will go out of balance and become ill. This is true in terms of the relationship between the qualities that define these paths macroscopically. Thus if you are extremely creative but do not allow yourself to express love then you might end up being a potentially enormously successful villain, but actually a failed villain—since there is no one to support or share your villainy. The moment you support or share, you moderate your villainy. Or if you are very loving, and indeed also loving to yourself (a necessary condition for any love at all, because you are only as strong as the love that constitutes you), but extremely boring or uncreative, then you will not be able to expand your love, because you will not be acting in ways which exploit the natural variety and opportunities of the environment to express your love. You will be a monological lover, knowing only one way to love; you will not increase the love that you have and are at the rate you would if you were creative.

On a final note here it is important to see the connection between love, which unifies all the virtues, and strength. Because actually nothing is stronger than love; love is not soppy or sentimental at all. Of course these may be manifestations of a strong love in a particular context. But, in its essence, love is the cohesive force in the universe, which makes it whole, and in your ground-state that which makes you coherent, strong, autonomous and whole.

Section 4: Love and the Emotions: Conceptual Questions and Basic Issues

Considering the three basic modalities of non-duality, love (to recapitulate) plays a key role in each of them. At the level of the ground-state it is the binding totalising force that makes the universe one whole. Moreover, at this level you naturally spontaneously and unconditionally express love, and to experience that all you have to do is let go (of everything that blocks and constrains or conditionalises your life). At the level of transcendental identification in consciousness, this is the most elemental form of unification, an expression of love or the cohesive power—be it solidarity, compassion or trust—which binds the surface level of our activity and society together. At the level of fine structure, it is precisely the principal driving force in the dynamics of your interactions at the level of your embodied personality, your likes and dislikes, wants and preferences, fears and desires, etc.

Love is not an action. Indeed (as I have hinted) it is even slightly misleading to say it is an emotion. Rather, it is the source of all emotions. Emotions mediate between the mind and the body; and the self and the world. All our (negative) emotions depend upon the absence or incompleteness (e.g. conditionality) of love. That is they subsist only in virtue of the love at our ground-state (no person would be jealous of someone else except in virtue of love or even something about that person that they wanted for themselves); these negative emotions all disappear when there is only love. Moreover, all these emotions which are parasitic upon love are systematically related to each other, and to the social structure which embodies the characteristic categorical

mistakes of demi-reality. Thus, again, jealousy depends on the mistake of confusing your own concrete singularity with that of someone else.

There is no one-to-one relationship between love and behaviour. On the contrary, you cannot say from an action, which is always at the domain of the actual, whether or not it is e-motivated by or grounded in love. Moreover, unconditional love will always express itself in a concretely singularised and maximally efficacious way. It might be said that if I unconditionally love everyone why do I spend so much time on my child or on philosophy or whatever. This would depend on the specificity of my relationships, and remember that it is only I now here who can act. So my unconditional love for the newsagent across the road cannot be expressed in the same way as my love for my child or my vocation.

At a phenomenological level, at our day-to-day life, most of us love that which complements us, and in particular we tend to love a human being who we think will complete or make us whole. This sets up the first of the five radiating circles of love, namely: a person's love for another human being; a person's love for herself; a person's love for all human beings; a person's love for all beings; and a person's love for god. It is easy to show that the desire for love for another being in order to complement oneself or make one whole (even if this was felt unconditionally) is certainly not a tenable one, and must immediately pass into a love for oneself to be whole; and, only in the situation in which one is truly whole will one be able to love and be loved by other wholes in an unconditional way which will not impede your growth and development. And when you are a whole, you will love the wholes enfolded within you, and eventually you will see or feel yourself incomplete unless and until you love the totality or whole, i.e. a universal god.

Unconditionality qualifies both emotions and actions. Thus to do something or feel something conditionally is to take back, or place a block on, what you give. In the case of action it is very important to see that when one is acting from love, *one must act in a totally unemotional way.* This is a sort of paradox, because one is acting out of an emotion, but for that to be maximally

efficacious, like any action, it cannot be split or divided by emotional or any other disturbing intentionality or disturbance (and emotion actually means disturbance). That is why I prefer not to think of love as an emotion, but if you want to say that love should take the place of your emotions, that's fine. What is important is that you are free of negative emotions.

So if the fundamental norm in the case of mind was not so much to clear your mind but to unthink and in-build all its valid content as knowledge, so that your mind was empty, here the clearing of your emotions is again a kind of emptying—no more jealousy, no more anger, pride, etc. What would you be left with then? Assertiveness is an essential quality manifested in any property of the ground-state. All the virtues such as courage, which are golden means between competing vices of excess and deficiency, in this case, foolhardiness and fear. So what you develop in place of emotions are virtues; and virtues are an in-built part of your being. Does this mean you do not feel? Of course not. Just as you still think, you still feel. But freeing yourself of the bound energy which takes the form of negative emotional traits, often encrusted in your bodily being, is actually leaving you free to feel when you need to feel, to respond in a spontaneous and emotional way, to act in a physiognomically expressive way, that is to cry, to laugh, to hold, or whatever other form of manifestation in which you freely feel, without blocks.

Just as when your mind is clear you should be able to solve a crossword puzzle more quickly than when it is full of distracting thoughts, then when you need to express an emotion such as a need to receive affection, support or attention from a fellow human being, you will express it more quickly and easily when you are free from emotional turbulence such as pride or fear (what would they think?) and correspondingly act out of your emotion, act from feeling, for feeling. This direct feeling-to-feeling relationship parallels the relationship we have from mind-to-mind and is just another form of consciousness-to-consciousness identification or connection. So when you are truly located at your ground-state you will feel for every other being in the universe, knowing that you can only directly affect at an overt level a tiny fraction. Later we will identify the covert mechanisms by

means of which, through co-presence and aspects of inner reciprocity which it grounds, the slightest act of loving kindness can set up a ripple with volcanic cosmic effects. So the topic we are discussing is one that literally takes us to the heart of our subject. This is how we can de-alienate ourselves, re-unite ourselves and all other beings (on all the planes of social being), ultimately in a way which respects their concrete singularity and the concrete singularity of our relations to them.

Generally the more evolved you are, the more deeply and totally you will feel the pain of all other beings and seek to release them or help them to release themselves from the hurt and unfreedom which binds them from their past or in their present relationships (including our action).

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Let me summarise some basic key themes:

1. All paths to freedom, whether they be put in the form of yoga, gnosis, maghfirah or whatever, embody the drive of love, and in particular the drive to union with the source of all union, a kind of magical alchemical formula in terms of which you can never lose and never be hurt. For the purer your love the less touched you can be by anything that does not share your purity. For any heteronomy that exposes itself will be dissolved and de-totalised from that pure union which would be you. More prosaically, in routine experiences of love we transcend our normal self (in the relative sense of transcend), inspiring, empowering and healing it. Love is not an action, but a motive or ground for action. There is no one-to-one relationship between love and behaviour or action. Love is to be conceived at the level of the non-actual real, rather than the actual. So you cannot say without knowing the context whether an action shows love or not. Of the five radiating circles of love, love for yourself, love for another human being, love for all of creation and love for god, *self-love* must be the rock on which all other loves are built, but only if and insofar as it is directed to love at your ground-state, that is the project of *self-realisation*. Then the pure love of your ground-state will be the rock on which you display and engage your

ground-state qualities in activity in the world. Love is unique in both that it attracts itself, and in this way attracts sustenance from the rest of being, and also in that it is entirely self-sufficient. You do not have to give a justification for love. Rather, everything has to be justified in terms of it.

2. Briefly to list six theorems on love:

(i) All negative emotions depend on the absence or incompleteness of love.
(ii) Nevertheless they all exist only in virtue of love, on which they unilaterally depend.
(iii) They disappear or dissolve when there is only love (and we have already looked at one or two techniques for doing this and we shall explore more later in this chapter).
(iv) All negative emotions are symbiotically related to each other.
(v) All are systematically related to the social structure, of which they are internalised parts. Thus desire and greed are as essential to capitalism as order on the production line.
(vi) All negative emotions are systematically related to categorial error, philosophical mistakes, the mis-identifications on which the world of *maya*, the *myopia* on which the world of demi-reality depends, such as the way in which jealousy depends on a mis-identification of your own concrete singularity and uniqueness for that of someone else's.

3. I will now briefly list the constituents of our emotional makeup or 'body' and the way in which we might deal with any disturbance:

(i) Behaviour—don't do it.
(ii) Consciousness—second-order reflexive shift back, making the consciousness which disturbs you (e.g. anger), the object of your observing consciousness, taking you out of the disturbance.
(iii) Disposition—here we can exercise creative visualisation in two ways: first, the weaker strategy. If you suffer from fear, then you can visualise an army of protectors when you are going into the situation you are afraid of; or a stronger response, in the same situation, you imagine yourself a

transformed personality, courageous and bold and now you may surround yourself with an army of admirers (unless of course you have a problem with your vanity!). The basis of this way of dealing with traits like jealousy or fear is the fact that for the most part what we are jealous about or afraid of is not the situation itself but in our response to the situation. Thus because the fear is in our minds, therefore we deal with it in our minds. This strategy can be backed up with counter-habitual behaviour, that is breaking the routines in which your disposition may have become encrusted—e.g. if you have a problem with drinking or smoking when you eat or are in company, then try and frequent different restaurants or clubs or whatever.

(iv) Personality trait—for example, if you are a fearful person, what you need to do is affirm the contrary: for instance, that you are bold and courageous in all circumstances at all times. Just saying it, however, does not do very much. What you need to do is to bring out what it is in you that makes you fearful or jealous. And if you do not know, the source must be brought out or elicited from your (for surely it is in you) unconscious (a process of clearing which may involve further work), or more generally psychic being. So how do we elicit the nature or source of unconscious motivations? One way is psychoanalysis. But there are others. In a Zen monastery the abbot would often hit or shake a monk (when he was peacefully meditating) and tell him to speak very quickly in response to some question, the assumption being that, when taken by surprise, his conscious defences down, the monk would speak his hidden truth. So how do we simulate this condition in our present day and age? What we can do is write down an arbitrary but fixed number of times the proposition we want to affirm in rapid succession, say twenty-two times, each day for a set number of days, say eleven days, and then wait for a subliminal second after each time you have written it down, and see if there is a spontaneous response. Then write that down. Sooner or later if you keep this up, with maximal unthought, speed and spontaneity, you will find yourself writing reams, most of it

probably useless, but eventually containing a nugget you were unaware of. This mimics a form of transactional analysis and, in my experience, is a very effective and inexpensive technique. If you were to try and do this with a friend then an additional set of complications, resistances, transferences and counter-transferences would probably come into play. Moreover, often just bringing to consciousness the source of your fear or pain is enough to clear it. For example if you were left alone at the age of two in a hotel in a foreign land to look after your six-month old sibling who was violently sick, then you may have a fear of travelling, of staying in hotels, being left alone or having someone left in your care. Recognising that source will allow you to make the leap and to clear the unconscious resistance which produced that personality trait you dislike.

(v) At the deepest level we have the nature of your embodied personality. If this is such that you are endowed with a specific tendency to be jealous or afraid or whatever, then you must access your ground-state to transcend your embodied personality. Whether its nature was determined by your genetic structure or circumstances or karma or 'fate', your ground-state is stronger than all those things. For no set of circumstances, fate or genetic determination could exist at all without deriving in some way from the consciousness, intentionality and energy and other qualities deriving in some way from ground-states on the cosmic envelope. So it is not an absurdity to talk about 'transcending your genes'. Of course your ground-state has no genes. But on the contrary it has all the infinite potentialities which your genes do, *plus* those others which will enable you to transcend the limitations imposed upon your potentialities by your genes.

4. We have already seen that love is not an action, but a ground or motive for action. Acting unconditionally from love is acting from a non-dual ground and if it is spontaneous it is acting from a non-dual ground in a non-dual way; and that is the best form of acting that love can e-motivate. Conditionality always binds, it is always karmic not dharmic. In conditional love you

do two things: you give and then you put a condition on it, i.e. you take back something you have given. In any event the existence of a condition splits your intentionality in two, so that at least one cannot be fulfilled and inevitably there is something left within you which is inconsistent with your ground-state.

How then if love is not an action do you manifest love? Spontaneously, if you release, clear, let go of the constraints within your embodied personality, your love will manifest itself with its own innate intelligence. It is rather like learning a language. Language is something which matures within you, just as long as you have a suitable context. Since Chomsky we are beginning to appreciate that language is an innate faculty within us, that children grow languages in a suitable environment in the way an acorn grows into an oak in a suitable environment. You have to stop the acorn growing into an oak and in the same way you would have to stop a child learning a language. In other words you do not have to teach her, she spontaneously learns. Nevertheless the structure of our society is so unfavourable to the development of our natural potentialities, so constrains them, that you may feel that you need to learn how to express your love. And you can actually cultivate forms of expression of love through the acquisition of virtues. For virtues are the form which mediates love as a property of the ground-state and action as a feature of your overt behaviour in the world. Moreover, there are practices in which you can learn the virtue of compassion (working in an old people's home), or practices in which you can acquire the virtue of courage (martial arts); and when you have a wide enough bouquet of virtues, then surely you won't find it difficult to express love. The most basic point is this: that love naturally expresses itself, the important thing you have to do is shed, release and clear the constraints on its expression.

The emotions (including love) and feelings are of a physiognomically expressive, physically embodied personality constituted in four-planar social space. They are formed at the junction of body, mind and society. And therefore in a certain way they are the key index in the project of self-realisation and universal self-realisation that this book is motivating. So if there is a single nodal point or lever which we need to work on, it will be our

emotions because they concentrate or condense constraints at a single site, rather in the way in which love coheres the totality.

Thus if we have an egoistic identification with our mind and this is tied into our position in society, then we will find that hangs together with the emotion of pride. So that if we then get rid of the pride, our ego will diminish, we will moderate our fixation with our mind and we will begin to re-evaluate the nature of our position in society and even the society itself.

In fact it is very difficult to work on your ego and quite difficult to work on your mind, and very difficult to work on the social structure or your particular position within it. But by working on your emotions, you work on all those four fronts simultaneously; and identifying the key emotion which is your block or constraint or issue, you will be working on five fronts simultaneously. And insofar as you are an embodied being, you will be working on your physical well-being and health too. Finally, as I have already argued, love is that ground-state quality which coheres and binds all other ground-state qualities and has a unique dynamic of its own. It will inevitably replace the negative emotion you are working on. So there are at least seven good reasons, if you want to start somewhere along the lines of this book, in picking what you consider to be your greatest emotional weakness to work on. When you have cleared it, you will be amazed at—apart from the love and energy you feel—how much else you have cleared and not only in you.

Section 5: Clearing the Emotions

The Analysis of Emotions

I now want, building on the analysis of the emotions I undertook in Section 4, Sub-section 3, to fine-tune and nuance it. Before we start the analysis of emotions, the reader may like to just think for a moment and jot down what it is that they hate, fear, are envious of; what they are proud of in their lives.

Emotions such as anger or jealousy may be viewed on at least five levels:

Level One:	Behaviour
Level Two:	On consciousness or a current state
Level Three:	Disposition or trait
Level Four:	Personality type
Level Five:	Intrinsic nature of embodied personality.

Certain forms of behaviour may be clearly seen to display anger, jealousy, pride, etc. Yet, I have already argued that there is no one-to-one relationship between the behaviour and the consciousness, e.g. of an emotional state of anger, jealousy or pride with which it would most naturally be associated (that it is possible to behave in an angry way out of love; just as it is possible to simulate love [behave in a loving way] out of hate). I will assume for the moment that if we are in control of our states of consciousness, that is if we are clear in our emotional moods and feelings, then we will be able to control our behaviour, so that we will act in the way that, other things being equal, is spontaneously the right way in the situation that occurs. The model of right-action being used here is simply that if one has total clarity (purity or coherence) in mental, emotional and physical being, then one will have total coherence in activity; that if one is in one's ground-state, one will act with maximal coherence and in a spontaneously right way. Anger or some other negative emotion experienced at the level of conscious feeling may be susceptible to a second-order or reflexive shift in consciousness or awareness, such that if we can move our consciousness from a state of angry consciousness, to a state of consciousness of that angry consciousness, then one will no longer be in that angry consciousness, but merely an observer of it, and as such no longer angry. It is vital of course that in this reflexive shift, one does not in the observing state make any judgement about that first-order state of consciousness—that one does not think 'how terrible, there I go being angry again'. Just the non-dual power of attention on the first-order state of consciousness will itself dissipate the anger, whereas a judgement about that state of consciousness will dualistically split and divide the energy available for its repair, and at the same time in expressing a judgement, reinforce or replicate at a second-order level the very anger, or some other simulacrum, of the experience of the first-order level.

Of course the state of angry consciousness may recur subsequently and consistently, in which case we may have to come to regard the angry consciousness (and, *ceteris paribus*, the angry behaviour) as the product of a distinct disposition or tendency, albeit possibly one which is only set off by a certain kind of stimulus. How would one deal with a disposition to be angry either in general or in a particular set of circumstances? If one knows that a particular situation is liable to set the anger off, then, from the standpoint of self-referentiality, thus understanding that the anger lies within oneself, not in the situation, then a variety of techniques are at one's disposal. First, one may operate directly on one's mind and emotional being, visualising, for instance, the situation which stimulates anger, in a capsule or balloon, which one sees floating away in the sky; or one may deliberately go into that situation seeing oneself cocooned in a dense (say pink) foliage of love, such that one feels so loved and so loving that an angry thought or emotion becomes almost physically impossible to entertain. Such techniques of visualisation may be reinforced by obvious practical steps. Thus if one finds oneself angry when one arrives at work, then one can try going to work by a different route, say a particularly pleasant and scenic route. It may add ten minutes to the journey but it may involve saving far more than ten minutes of psychic wear and tear; and in the last instance if one's work situation is such that one is continually angry then one must consider why one does not change one's job. These are techniques of setting up counter-habitual behaviour. For instance, if one only smokes when having a drink, and one is seriously worried about one's smoking, then giving up smoking may be made easier by not drinking. Ultimately, however, the disposition may be so grounded in the nature of one's personality, that no technique, including one which is designed to affect an indirect (metaphoric or metonymic) clearance of this land works, so that then one will have to dig deeper to discover what it is about the nature of one's personality[9] or one's

[9] That is a clearance which is designed to affect one part of one's being by operating on another part (metaphoric); or the whole of one's being by operating on one part of one's being (metonymic).

particular formation that results in the disposition that one is trying to clear or eliminate.

One way of discovering this, already briefly discussed in Section 4, is to deliberately affirm the contrary and test, check or elicit one's own negative responses to it. For instance, supposing one is fearful, then write 'I am courageous at all times' twenty-two times in succession, waiting momentarily each time to discover whether there is any response one wants to make (that is which one's unconscious is trying to say). Ideally this should be done spontaneously and in a flow; and if one does this for say eleven days in a row, then surely one will find negative responses coming from within which will express or indicate the block, imbalance or cause of the feature of one's personality one wants to change. One may get nothing the first seventeen times and the eighteenth time comes the response (from oneself) 'no you're not—you're shit scared: like that night on the staircase . . . '; and then one just writes spontaneously whatever it is one's unconsciousness is remembering that is excluded from your consciousness. Then one gets an indication of what kinds of visualisations, counter-habitual practises and alternative skills, powers and capacities one needs to build into one's embodied personality so that one ceases to be fearful and becomes as courageous as one's transcendentally real self, adopting the role in respect of the embodied personality of a parent to a growing child and what they would want its personality to be. For fear does not exist in the ground-state and a liberated being possesses only qualities consistent with those of its ground-state. Of course the technique that I have just mentioned may be supplemented by conversational, transactional support from friends, counsellors and others; but this is an inexpensive way of getting one's unconscious to speak. Most people are aware that inside them is a babble of voices, a veritable chatterbox, so the idea of listening to what one part of oneself is trying to tell one is by no means absurd. Moreover, the virtue of writing it down is that you objectify and achieve distance from yourself, so that it is there for you to analyse on subsequent occasions, while in the flow of this method of self-analysis there is no reason why one should not be in a non-dual way of writing (expression).

We have been seeing that the emotions can be viewed or understood, conceptually, in a number of interrelated ways—in particular as occurrent states; as dispositions liable to produce those occurrent states; as personality types, grounded in aspects of a (more or less transient) intrinsic nature of an embodied personality. For example, someone who has a jealous nature, that is who has a jealous personality, will typically manifest the disposition, trait or tendency of jealousy, which itself may be realised as occurrent states of jealous behaviour or consciousness; and all this may have to be explained in terms of the formation of his embodied personality. To be pure in the sense of being free of the emotion of jealousy we need to clear (or control) that emotion, that is to be free of domination by it, at all these levels.

Thus we have seen that the occurrent states such as of jealousy, fear, pride, anger, greed, apathy, etc. are possibly the easiest level of an emotional syndrome to deal with. It is relatively easy to stop being jealous, less easy not to have a jealous disposition; and if one has it, quite difficult to stop being a jealous personality type, etc.[10] The easiest technique is that of a reflexive shift, that is a shift from the first-order to the second-order of awareness. This is effected by becoming conscious of the fact that one is in a state of angry consciousness or behaviour and this consciousness of angry consciousness or behaviour, this second-order consciousness of that first-order state, will not be itself the state of angry consciousness. One has achieved distance from the occurrent state of anger or jealousy or pride or fear or whatever. The important question then becomes that of finding and dealing with its causes. These causes may be explored in a number of different ways, by conscious reflection on the circumstances and conditions in which

[10] It is interesting from the perspective of the themes of this book to consider the ways in which jealousy is categorially underpinned by the attitude of analytical universalisability or uniformity—the thinking of the jealous person is typically, why can't I be like him or her, why am I different (disadvantaged, etc.). The standpoint here articulated of dialectical universalisability and concrete singularity itself, when clearly reflected through, makes it a bit easier to see that the vices, such as the negative emotions we are discussing here, are actually grounded in and replicate categorial errors or mistakes in the structure of social (and human) reality itself.

dispositions to the emotional state have arisen, and the circumstances or situations in which the trait or personality type was established. Group dynamics, transactional analysis, etc. may all help in this.

For the moment I turn to resume some ways of acting on the dispositional level. A common technique for dealing with a dispositional state, when it begins to press on consciousness or behaviour, is to physically, energetically clear or change the balance of the body (e.g. by engaging in another activity, or by going for a walk or taking a cold shower or listening to relaxing music). These may all be ways of clearing or re-energising the energetic or dispositional state which was becoming suffused with the emotional tendency. These are however only momentary or relatively transitory releases. More routinised clearing may take systematic forms of meditation, prayer, physical exercise, sustained rest, relaxation, or changing the context in which one works, lives and socialises. At a deeper level one may set up counter-habitual routines or patterns of behaviour. Thus if one is always dispositionally prone to behave in a certain way in a given situation, e.g. to choose a certain dish or drink, one can consciously try and do something different, ultimately establishing a routine which will effectively null or break the pre-existing syndrome or pattern of behaviour. Ultimately of course it may be an ideal to have no pattern (as such) of behaviour. This in a way was the idea behind Zen and Tantric practices, in which the activity of estrangement from the normal routine was seen as a way (at least in these practices initially) of breaking through the veneer or barrier of surface habits and routines in order to penetrate to a pure essence or essential self. This was often done in a way by consciously simulating a critical, absurd or otherwise incoherent situation, which would have rather the same effect as I argued in *The Possibility of Naturalism*,[11] when I thematised the notion of the scientific primacy of the pathological or abnormal case, that social crises did, in making transparent the fundamental structures of social life. This is exploiting the sense in which the pathological,

[11] Harvester Press, Brighton, 1979 (Third Edition, 1998, Routledge, Chapter 2, Section 5).

but equally we can find ways in which the comic, just as much as the tragic, gives us a diagnostic clue to an underlying reality which in some distorted but eye-catching way it expresses.

If one really wants to effect not just the disposition, but the nature which grounds the negative emotional personality trait, then one will have to engage in processes of systematic **metaphoric** or **metonymic** action or behaviour, that is action or behaviour at one level of reality which is designed to clear all the traces and residues of a trait predominantly displayed at another level of reality in virtue of the systematic interconnection between the levels involved. In this way, for example, in order to defuse a negative emotion which one has worked on, such as fear or pride, one might wish to engage in a thorough bout of spring-cleaning, physically cleaning the house, white-washing the walls, etc. as a metaphoric or metonymic expression of, and to complement or complete, the clearing done at another level of one's being.

Let us look at some aspects of these processes of clearing. Consider first the physical body and its energetic (or so-called 'etheric') sheath or vehicle. Cold showers (the rationale for which would be gone into later); or systematic physical exercises which may be given a spiritual underpinning, such as yoga (India); Kum Nye (Tibet); Tai Chi or even Chi Gong (China); reducing your breathing to a very slow rate, so as to effectively reduce your metabolic rate right down to the ground-state level of the universe; rest; relaxation; appropriate sport. In all these exercises the maxim or rule of effortlessness is very important: this means not trying too hard and being willing to give up or let go. This is inaction in the form of either abstaining or withdrawing from action or in the form of acting at a very low level of vibration[12] or by adopting the standpoint of defencelessness or no resistance (on which see the next chapter). Physical releases obtained in sports and other energetic modes of activity can play a great role in clearing the chakras or energy centres. At a more systematic level cleanses designed to work on either specific organs or whole groups of organs,

[12] Paradoxically, as in the bi-focal nature of lenses, one can often produce the same effect by a small or minimal or negative action as one can by a large or maximal or positive action.

perhaps systematically connected by meridians, may all play an important role: proper nutrition; eating slowly; avoiding toxins and other pollutants; up to and including fasts of hours, days or even up to one or two weeks. All of these will be more or less contextually and holistically dependent, and therefore have to be concretely singularised to the unique body and its organic environment,[13] together with the cultural context to which one belongs. Again, alternative therapies such as acupuncture, aromatherapy, reiki, and other therapeutic complementary/supplementary or alternative forms of healing may all play a great role in clearing either the physical vehicle or the residue within the physical vehicle of emotional stresses or strains. Then again I have already considered the way in which metonymic behaviour or activity can play a role here too. Thus if one wants to clear a problem or a residue of an unhappy emotional relationship then this clearing or cleansing may be helped or affected by the same or similar behaviour being done, metonymically or metaphorically. Thus by the same token, breaking a relationship can often be symbolised and cemented by imagining cutting a physical tie, cord or knot. Freshening may take the form of spring-cleaning one's living space, etc. Also important here is actually physically relocating or recontextualising one's being, one's place of work or living; or periodically travelling on holidays—all these are ways in which one can make an emotional break, or (holistically speaking) a life change.

Clearing the unconscious of course can be done in a number of ways. I have already noted one here. This consists in making an affirmation, an affirmation as to something one wants to do or be or become, and putting it in the present tense so as to affirm that one already is, for example, healthy, wealthy and wise. And then to note the tacit resistance that one experiences to this affirmation, especially when repeatedly and insistently reaffirmed, almost like a mantra, which one holds close to one at each moment either for a period within a day, or for a number of days or whatever. This will set up a sort of internal dialogue between the

[13] Thus it has been said that the laws of nature, in this respect, change every fifteen miles, in which case this is the radius within which home-grown food will taste right.

force within you that wants to make the affirmation and all those forces within you that (heteronomously) counter it. If done on paper, this can be a very constructive exercise, and may take the form of a progression in which successive layers of resistance to the realisation of one's life goals are revealed to one's self.

Turning now to our imaginative faculties, and in particular to the activity of visualisations. What cannot be over-stressed here is the creative power of thought. The role of the imagination, in creative model-building in science (in what I have called the analogical-retroductive moment), is absolutely crucial to the dialectic of scientific discovery. Thought in the sense of awareness or attention combined with activity in the sense of volition or intention is a massive force, an indispensable condition of human social life. All our acts or objectifications on the world depend on it. Is it therefore so strange that we may be able to affect by the power of thought alone invisible (non-physical) emotional and mental, individual and social life?

Where do the emotions come in? Action, and the intentional thought which it both instantiates and depends on, is (e-)motivated, i.e. directed—that is to say the emotions are the directing agency in life, they tell us where and how to put the information and energy at our disposal, they determine the nature of the acts that we perform, with the cognitive tools and resources we have.

Let us examine some ways in which visualisation may clear or otherwise enrich our emotional life, and more generally our lives and the lives of others. So, if you want to forget an incident or a person, imagine a balloon round them, floating high in the sky, and then cut the cord and watch it float away. If you want to shut the door on the past, then imagine yourself slamming the door on the past you want to forget, over and over again. If you want to go out into the street late at night, when you feel uneasy imagine yourself protected with armour plating and a sword. If you want to go to sleep, why not imagine yourself lying, snoozing on a favourite beach. Imagine the situation in great detail, think of the warm sun on you and the lapping of the water on the shore and everything that goes to make up the totality of that experience—better perhaps than counting sheep; or you can try

seeing yourself in a pink circle swathed in soft cushiony fluffy mist. Suppose you feel endangered in your house at night, imagine yourself digging a moat around it; suppose you feel threatened by your flatmates, imagine a mosquito net around your bed. These examples are merely examples, everyone, once they start to practise, will find things which work in a situationally specific way for them. A few further examples. If you seem stuck in your life, imagine yourself unravelling a knot: see what knots are sticking, see if you can identify them as the knot unravels, look at the colours and then see if you can turn the knot into a tapestry. If you want to start afresh imagine yourself wiping a blackboard or a slate absolutely clean. If you want to learn from an experience imagine the experience providing you with jewels, look at them, feel them, and identify them and put them in a jewel box. If you feel that you are dying, imagine your own special garden, think about the weeding and pruning and transplanting that you need to do; make your garden as beautiful as you can. If you want to eliminate the thought of yourself as you were in the past, set fire to that thought, that past or residue of the past that is still alive, present in your consciousness.

What about obsessive thoughts, a thought which just won't go away? Let it roll over you, float over you. This is particularly important in the case of fears: to face your fear is sound advice, but you have to know how to do it: you either go into the fear, go into it very deeply indeed, encountering in the intensity of your imagination or even in actuality the object of your fear until it is a fear no more; or you let the fear go into you, and the odds are that it will go straight through you. You may have to do this repeatedly, but eventually it will go and return no more. Remember: 'The wild geese cast their reflections in the water but the water has no mind with which to receive them'. This is a Zen koan or puzzle. Stop and think about it for a moment. What does this mean—it means that if we are like water, a pure circulating movement, without a mind which is fixed and stuck and solid, then any thought, like a wild goose, will just fly over your head: you will be able to attend to it if you wish, but it will not leave an imprint on you, it will not become a part of you in the way in which your thoughts and worries and fears do.

I have already said the mind is a very powerful tool, particularly if it is trained (or tamed) and undivided (or one-pointed). It itself, when conjoined with the motivating power of our desires or intentionality, is the creative force in the human world. But thought itself has a suggestive power. Imagine therefore that if thoughts are things, and certainly once we loosen the category of a thing so that it no longer has the atomistic-punctual connotations of empiricist ontology (as we certainly should do), then thoughts are indeed things and causally efficacious (as well as in principle causally explicable) things. Imagine then what power the thought forms which we call ideologies have. Or imagine the thoughts which grew to particular icons, entities, fantasies; fashions, scenes, teams; systems of thought, of production, of linguistic or cultural sedimented habit; the thought, the niggling thoughts, that are possessions not just of ourselves but of all others in like situations. These are the egregors. How they weigh our consciousness down.

I will now look at some ways in which we can look at some of the more negative aspects of the mind; but, before I do so, it is important to remember that in the case of many thoughts, we can free ourselves from them by the attitude of second-order or reflexive shift or distanciation. Remember also that thought, at least in the guise of the intellect, is an absolutely essential discriminator, without which we would literally be lost in the world. It is thought in the form of the intellect which allows us to choose right from wrong, better from worse, etc., etc. But thought, although playing a role in the dialectic of learning, as we saw in Chapter 3, is neither the beginning nor the end of it. The beginning of it lies in the spontaneous 'I see it!', and the moment of Platonic anamnesis which it expresses, and the end of it lies in the hermetic moment of 'double-initiation', in which it has become a part of our innermost being, so that what is learnt can be spontaneously, creatively, pliably applied as the situation warrants.

In Chapter 3 I have looked at ways in which we can both tame and exercise the mind. Here I am mainly concerned with how the mind or exercising the mind can play a role in clearing or controlling the emotions. Meditation, in the form of self-emptying (or the gnosis) of the mind, either with or without a mantra, that

is the repetition of a sound, word, sentence, prayer, invocation, etc. (which may be specific either to a person, or to a task, either for a day or for longer), is one form in which we can systematically climb up, like an Indian rope ladder, layers of consciousness until we reach a more and more refined or subtle state, in which our awareness is increasingly and only focused on itself. If this is a common way of practising transcendence, then it is equally important to realise that its beneficial effects are entirely dependent on the way that state, of restful alertness, can be engaged and displayed over the whole array of the activities we pursue in everyday life. Concentration or focus (on an object); contemplation, that is absorption (by an object [e.g. a picture]); introspection; revelation; accessing dream states; accessing the gap or space provided by engaging in rest; the suspension of thought or normal thought, or afforded by transforming the object of thought, i.e. changing what it is that one was thinking about, can all help to clear the ideational content of a thought pattern tying in to an emotional block. Prayer, saturation or absorption in nature (for a feeling of energising warmth there are few things better than hugging a nice oak tree) may all play a part. Music has its own specific emotional charges, as does painting, and indeed the arts and all forms of literature generally. All these may be healing and healing is just the focusing of energy, whether it takes a visual, tactile or some other sensual form or not, on something which has been hurt, that is neglected, or injured, some lack, or ill, some dis-ease, which has made oneself more or less incomplete. Even the most enlightened beings, in virtue of their very humanity, need healing; and it is inconceivable that this should ever be otherwise.

Generalising the Concept of Metonymic Behaviour

We can generalise the idea of metonymic (or for that matter metaphoric) activity in terms of the concept of esoteric activity or behaviour. In metaphoric behaviour we work on one level to help clear another level; in metonymic behaviour we work on one level to help clear the totality of levels. What we have here is the idea of a series of levels, characteristically stratified, in the sort of way in which critical realism has typically emphasised (these levels may, or at times may not, be characterised by relations of

synchronic and/or diachronic emergence). These levels may refer to levels of embodiment of a person, or of that person conceived as an embodiment' of a soul or psychic being, in which case we may think of the stratification involved as one of consciousness, rather than embodiment per se. In principle this stratification occurs at the level of activities; collectivities; social and natural structures too. Let us focus on perhaps the simplest form of embodiment: the embodiment of a soul in a mental, emotional and physical form. These can be characteristically thought of as the stratification of mental, astral and physical bodies.[14] Then one can engage in esoteric activity, as so understood by operating to clear, infuse, heal, support, an organ, aspect or feature of embodiment at one level, by operating on it at another level. Or—to clear, heal or complete very major traumas or issues in general—one will need to do it at all levels of embodiment, agency or being. In principle the levels of embodiment ascend in degrees of increasing subtlety; the physical level being the most gross, or base level of embodiment, at least as known to us. (This does not apply to consciousness. Thus we have the concepts of the preconscious, and unconscious below the threshold of normal consciousness, which can also rise up to increasingly refined and subtle states, till we reach the state or level of supramental consciousness —typically in moments of transcendence.)

Thus an action, an effect caused by or at a level L1 can affect not only that level, but a higher- or lower-order level, that is L2 or L1. So working on the emotional, or astral plane, say sending someone a rosy emanation, can affect their thought and/or their physical state just as much as it affects their emotional well-being. Similarly, and in general, action at any one level will have effects at all levels (and not just itself), and similarly, action by an agent A will have an effect on himself and in principle on all

[14] Of course this stratification is too crude: thus around the physical body is an energetic sheath or vehicle, typically called the etheric body or field, and this is perhaps the place to say that all talk of embodiment, on the energetic-dispositional world view, should be conceived as talk in terms of fields. Therefore we have the stratification of fields in effect rather than bodies as customarily understood. At the same time the astral sphere may contain localised regions corresponding to the domain of the emotions as such; and others of a wider span.

other agents in the totality he inhabits. This leads us to the very interesting question of metonymic causation. Thus one may walk into a room of someone's house and suddenly feel very depressed—it is as if one is living in the clouds in a cloudy or smoggy environment, clouds or smog which may literally be caused by the thought forms, that is the entities of the person inhabiting it, not necessarily there, but perhaps before; or perhaps just someone or something (because thought can travel on its own) who or which has been there. More will be said about this later.

If one regards the evolution of matter and life as a process distinct from the evolution of the (human) souls which are embodied in men, then one can also quite readily accept that there may well have been an evolution of physical forms prior to the embodiment of human souls, at the physical level. This has no implications whatsoever for the questions of creation; the reasons (or causes) for the evolution of material forms, generating life forms, eventually life forms of a sort capable of receiving human ensoulment; or for the state of human souls, after the/their creation and prior to their animal embodiment as members of a species on this planet.

Section 6: Love and the Emotions: Concluding Considerations

I have already argued that love is the most basic, binding, healing, expanding, uniting, totalising, energising, empowering force in the universe, and specifically in the social or humanised part of it. It is not to be identified with one particular form of manifestation of itself (that is of love), for these may vary from a state of blissful unity through to solidarity, compassion, dedication, devotion, responsibility, trust and a gamut of other emotions, affective states and modes of behaviour. Even more basically, there is no one kind of behaviour which constitutes an expression of love. Love is a force of the ground-state; not a specific activity; it shows itself in activity, but it must not be identified with the activity which it e-motivates. Indeed sometimes one shows one's love in displays of anger—this is anger out of love not anger 'in love', more obviously love is consistent with doing things which are

superficially painful or hurtful to the loved one, such as telling them a hard truth about themselves which no-one else is in a position to do. Then again love is always completely singularised to its objects—the way you love depends upon the object you love and the relationship in which you stand to that object. You do not display your love towards a dog or a cat the way you would towards a nephew or a niece. Though love, as we have seen, is associated with the idea of union, it also is associated with a conatus for autonomy—so love will always entail a respect for difference and independence.

Let us now resume the first three theorems concerning love in the list I gave in Section 4, Sub-section 2:

1. All negative emotions depend upon the absence or incompleteness of love.

2. All negative emotions nevertheless exist or persist only in virtue of, that is they are unilaterally dependent on, love.

3. When there is only love then there is no room for anything else—this is a state of perfect non-duality, so that we can say that love is sufficient unto (or but) itself; that is, perfect unconditional and complete love neither requires nor can receive any external justification. At this point we are just love, or if you like bundles of loving, creative, joyous, intelligent energy (pulling into the definition of such a being some other properties of their/our ground-states). The second proposition enunciated may cause surprise. But if you dig deep enough into any emotion or emotionally charged situation, you will find that it ultimately depends upon love. Thus what could be more striking a feature than the violence and hatred and anger displayed in war, but how would such a war be possible without the solidarity of the soldiers at the front, or the support and sustenance of the sisters at home? Recognising that all negative emotions actually depend on and tacitly feed off love is a good way in which to begin to enhance and empower the zone of love in that situation and chip away at the negativity within it. The more you recognise the love you depend on (and feed off in your angers, hatreds and jealousies), the more (since like attracts like) you will expand the zone of love and decrease the zone of the negative emotion parasitic on it. And the same goes for the constitution of situations which

are built, like all TINA formations, as complexes of the false, the negative, the absence of love on the true, the positive and the presence of love (hitherto occluded, denied or otherwise dominated and masked). The strategy *of ahimsa* or non-violence, such as turning the other cheek, actually depends upon getting the other to recognise his own dependence on love, and eventually to elicit that love within himself which is a tacit condition, albeit flagrantly denied, of his blows or assault.

At this point the reader may like to spend five or ten minutes just considering what it is in their life that they love. Do they love, and if they think this proper why it is that they love what they do. Their love may be for a beer or a football team, there is nothing necessarily sacrosanct about the circles of love that I have articulated. Is it necessary for your love to be reciprocated? Many people appear to find great difficulty with the idea of unreciprocated (unrequited) love. Yet, they would be very surprised indeed if their favourite football star expressed love for them; just as an ancient Greek would find preposterous, even though his thoughts were forever attuned to god, that god should be looking down and loving him. In any event a little reflection will show that the only love worthy of the name is unconditional love. For conditional love is (and if my analysis above is correct) all this consists in, love, but it is love mixed or contaminated with something else, such as possessiveness, jealousy, fear or whatever. Opposed to relationships of unconditional love are contractual, market (monetarised), or routinely socially sanctioned or sustained relationships, as well as those dependent or kept in place by brute force or other savage impulsions. In your love then other emotions are mixed with love to make it less than fully unconditional—for to demand a reciprocity or a response from the loved one is to impose a condition. Of course if the loved one is truly an appropriate object of your love, then the loved one will be full of love for you and in your very act of loving you will elicit, through the unfolding of your love within them, their love for you. This cannot however be the motive for your love, or else it will not be pure, unconditional, i.e. non-dual love, love untainted by some other emotion which denies its essential drive.

What do you think are the negative emotions that are most

important or causally efficacious in your life? Is it jealousy? Is it pride? Is it fear? Is it greed? Or, is it anxiety? How do you view such emotions? Are you perhaps happy with them? Certainly every negative emotion may have its proper place—in the presence of a snake it is quite reasonable to feel fear (and fear is in fact naturally stimulated in human beings by such an apparition). Where the fear (in this case of snakes) becomes the problem is of course if one is obsessively haunted by it in situations where no snake could possibly ever occur; or if the fear of snakes dominates one's existence in any geographical vicinity where a snake might occur. Similarly it is important to take pride in your own and other's achievements, but if you feel pride long after that achievement or nothing else but pride when it occurs then you will surely not be in a position to have learned from that achievement, which consists in just moving on from it, that is being able to let go of the achievement, saying thank-you to the achievement (or the universe, in the particular form of all those who helped it to occur), and move on with the rest of one's life; otherwise, the pride may stick or fixate energy which should be unbound as rapidly as possible, if one is truly to enjoy the fruits of what it is that you have done.

We have already seen that negative emotions such as fear, desire,[15] apathy, etc. are:

1. Systematically related to each other (as well as individually and collectively being parasitic on love).

2. Clearly related to the objective social structure, which is internalised, as a habitus or routine, in virtue of which the agents experiencing these negative emotions, reproduce or transform it.

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[15] It may be objected that desire is surely not a negative emotion; after all how could anyone do anything without desire? But this is to confuse desire with intentionality. Desire is actually oriented not on an activity but on a result or consequence of that activity, which it is supposed will give enjoyment. As such the mind or the energy in the activity is split between the activity (and its proper enjoyment) and the desire (or gratification in its achievement, fulfilment, or remorse in its non-fulfilment). Desire thus not only makes the non-fulfilment of intentionality more likely (because of the split, dual or divided nature of the mind in that state of desire), but binds the desiring agent to the fields of the consequences of his action, to which he himself has chosen to cling. This confusion of desire with intentionality is very prevalent.

3. Themselves dependent upon, or indeed embodying philosophical category mistakes. We should not be surprised at the third property since we have seen that categories (and category mistakes) are real, and, as real, they form part of or underpin that very social structure which the agents' experiencing the negative emotions in their daily life reproduce or transform.

Thus the emotion of jealousy generally depends on the assumption that other people should be like oneself, or that one should have those desirable properties of the person whom one is jealous of, so that one should be like them—that is to say, other things being equal, it is based on a denial of the concrete singularity of the individuals concerned. Similarly the hatreds and angers expressed in the tribal feuds of communalism are based on the denial of the equal dignity and rights of different geo-historical trajectories. The mutual interdependence of an alienating, reified and oppressive social order, such as may be exemplified by capitalism, and negative emotions such as desire, fear, greed, apathy, pride, etc. is extremely striking. In such a social order demand for commodities is maintained by desire, puffed up by levels of greed, lust, etc. necessary to maintain profit rates; while pride insists on emulating one's neighbours in the consumption and display of commodities. Then, fear may make one submissive in the workplace, a fear of losing one's job, kept in place by a sense of pride in one's capacity to maintain one's 'face' in the commodity consumption stakes. If one does lose one's job, then apathy may set in, leading to lack of self-esteem, procrastination and a contrasting series of negative emotions, this one characterised by deficiency

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It is important to appreciate that if one has a desire, which is strong or insistent, then one should fulfil it. Unfulfilled and split intentionality are joined, and effectively equivalent, causes of karma. So if you want something, then you must fulfil it. My argument is merely that whatever earthly (this-worldly) or for that matter spiritual objective you set yourself, you will be set on a dialectic, basically powered by the norm of clarity (single-pointedness or coherence) in which you will eventually come to a position in which you realise that only consistency with your ground-state or dharma is tenable—so that self-realisation will be your sole/soul objective. This position can only be postponed, not altered. For whatever happens and whatever you do, you are always left with and subject to the intentionality of your ground-state. This you can never lose, so long as you are you.

'in the virtues' of the marketplace as the other consists in an excess. On this 'deficient' side, lack of assertiveness, resignation, etc., forms the mirror image of the shallow triumphalism of those who have succeeded in (for the time being) 'winning out' on the lottery of the marketplace. Here it is important to see that just as there are occasions and respects in which it is important to build or boost the ego, even though it is illusory, then desire, like all the other negative emotions, has its proper motivating place. For it is desire precisely in the form of a desire to achieve or fulfil something which stimulates and drives the embodied personality on until the point where it can let go of the desire for desire itself. Until this happens it is futile to try and relinquish desire—for a desire unrealised will inevitably return in some form until it is fulfilled or satisfied in some form and only in this way can the agent free himself of that state of desire. This does not mean that every desire has to be fulfilled in the form that the agent intends or thinks. Children know how one can play out in a relatively benign way their 'fantasies' or desires over a tea-party.

The object again to stress is that one is trying to become free from one's circumstances, karma and ultimately even one's genetic endowment. The most vivid form of imprisonment by a heteronomous past, one's ancestors are literally in one's genes—if you think about this closely enough you will soon begin to appreciate why you need to free yourself from your genes (do you really want your great great grandfather acting his fantasies, desires and fears out through you?). We need to correct imbalances, remove blocks (that is, unbind fixated energy) and constraints, whether these represent heteronomous orders of determination within or outwith oneself. In the latter case, where the constraint is in the social order, then it is absolutely essential to realise that the only way you can act, act on that social order, is by *your acting*; there is no way you can employ an agency or mediation to change it. You have to effect the change yourself, even if the change that you produce in your action causally initiates changes or a sequence of changes in other social agents and forms (just as it immediately constitutes a change in the social totality in itself). Again here we have the principle that the only way you can change anything in society is through acting yourself. This is a necessary truth, indeed

a truism; but what a striking change in perspective it entails, for it means that ultimately the only way, if you are dissatisfied with what is happening in the social world (or more generally the world outside yourself), is by your action, and if your action has not succeeded in producing the change which you feel is desirable then you must induce a change in your action, that is a change in yourself, so as to produce a transformed transformative practice which will have the desired effect. So if you want to change the world, then the *only* way you can do it is by changing yourself!

Section 7: Self-transformation

So how then do you work on yourself, how do you engage in the transformation of the only point of agency that you can actually affect, that is the point of agency which is your mediation and connection for all other points of agency. The first thing you must be sure of is that you really want to change. And you can only assess the rationality of any proposed change in your behaviour, dispositions, feelings, beliefs, practices, relationships, work, home, environment, etc. if you know what you want in life. Practically everyone is dissatisfied—alienation and anomie, a generalised sense of 'homelessness/hopelessness' is prevalent in the world. But have you ever asked yourself: what do you want to achieve in your life? What are your life purposes? Your life objectives? Try writing them down, if possible prioritising them or ordering them in a nested sequence. How successful have you been in achieving or fulfilling these objectives and how have they changed over time? Assuming that your proposed change in behaviour, lifestyle or practice is consistent with what you really want in life, it is important to affect the change at the right time. So build on the sense of achievement, initiate seemingly difficult changes when you are at a peak of achievement, 'on a high' not in a trough of despair (which is what most people tend to do); try if possible to change your normal working/living rhythms—e.g. if it is possible start the change on a holiday or by going on a holiday or taking a break of some other sort. Make sure that all the other components of your being at dimensions and levels other than that which you changed can sustain the change you wish to initiate. Don't

neglect the tremendous powers of your creative mind and imagination. Thus visualise yourself as a transformed personality and you will begin to act as if you are, then act as if you are that transformed personality and you will begin to become it. Learn to become what you want to be, for what you want to be is only the natural extension and expression of your ground-state: the flowering of your dharma, the ripening of your acorn into your oak. Remember that where you are wanting to get to will appear as effortless to you as the sun's shining is to it. The sun does not try to shine, it just shines. The flowers do not try to bloom, they just bloom. You do not have to try to be you, you just have to become only and as fully as you can just exactly what you essentially are. Though the end may be effortless, the path may be rocky.

Almost all life changes follow a similar pattern. First there is the feeling of exultation, exuberance, in one's new-found growth and freedom. Then there is the phase of disappointment, or even regression when it appears difficult or feels not worthwhile to sustain the change you have already initiated. This is when it is important not to give up, you are rewriting your history and so don't act on the basis of a narrative you have already rejected, someone else's story about yourself, tell your own story, your own story of yourself is the only one that counts—no-one else can get inside your head no matter how hard they try. The third phase then is of growing expansion and consolidation of the new you you are in the process of becoming, a phase which will ultimately reach fruition when the third cycle of creativity (the cycle of formation) has fully blossomed, so that you have made the new you a part of your innermost being, and you can now act as spontaneously, unconditionally, effortlessly and joyously from the new you that you have become, acting, making, objectifying into the world, seeing your intentionality fulfilled, in the outer submissiveness of the cosmic envelope to your inner responsiveness to your self-choice, your determination to win your autonomy, and become what you essentially are.

You must carefully balance your life on this journey from the initial decision to the final in-building of the new you or aspect of you into your embodied personality. The ancient Greeks agreed with the Buddha (and it is in keeping with the whole thrust

of the Vedic tradition) that for each virtue there were two vices, one of excess and the other of deficiency (too much or too little);[16] so initiating a path of change is like walking a tightrope, always use your common sense, remain focused and look ahead, keep your centre of gravity as low and as close to your ground-state as you possibly can. Remember the moral of Orpheus in the Underworld: there is no point in ever looking back, because you can never go back to where you were—each moment is new and the momentum of the process of change is irreversible. If you are embarked on a process of self-transformation then the result is never in doubt, only the time and the form.

We can put this all in the context of the model discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Embarking on the expansion of your embodied personality from a limited to a relatively unlimited self, from a state of enslavement (heteronomy) to one of freedom (autonomy), involves a dialectic in which two kinds of spirituality have to be delicately balanced:

(a) supportive, sublative spirituality; designed to boost your self-esteem, even to the point where it accentuates your sense of ego and separateness from the rest of the world, 'those shits';
(b) transformative spirituality, resulting, inter alia, in the eclipse of your sense of separateness from other human beings and the rest of creation, so that you are in a state of co-presence, mutuality and harmonious identification with the rest, i.e. the totality, of one's own being, 'those shits' then become loveable, even if slightly laughable, extensions of one's own self.

Section 8: Principles for Thinking Being as a Whole or Totality

Just as in analysing the self in Chapter 2 we looked at it in relation to some principles of 1M of ontology, and in analysing the mind in Chapter 3 we looked at it in relation to principles of 2E of negativity, that is the second level in which we need to think being, namely being as processual; so here in considering the

[16] Thus too much courage is foolhardiness, too little courage, fear, and so on.

emotions, and in particular in looking at the ground-state quality of love, of which the negative emotions are in some sense a displacement or distortion, we need to consider the third level for thinking being, namely 3L or totality, that is thinking being as a whole or totality. In the philosophy of metaReality, in contrast to critical realism, we are really not so much concerned with *thinking being* at these different levels, but **being being**, and in particular ending our alienation, that is our split from ourselves, other beings and the rest of the universe. Therefore we are above all concerned with being being as a whole. The level at which we are being as a whole is that of our ground-state. There is no alienation there, and there we are inseparably connected with all the other beings in the cosmos. So if at the level of our ego we think in terms of our separateness and opposition to other human beings and our opposition to the object world of our manipulation and control, reflecting the world of demi-reality, and at the level of our embodied personalities, we must necessarily understand them as in transformation, as developing and growing, clearly invoking the themes of 2E (just as we have seen that 1M incorporates the idea of being as containing causally efficacious illusions); so here at the level of 3L we are concerned with thinking being at the level of our ground-state, mainly as a whole set in the universe which is a whole containing other wholes. So here I will look at 3L principles of totality.

There are three main mechanisms for understanding the connectivity of beings in a single cosmos, as elements of one world. The first level is to understand them as externally related to each other but involved for a moment in identification. This may be the form of identification which establishes causal connection, but of more interest to us here is the transcendental identification between conscious or potentially conscious beings.

A second level of connection is to see these beings in thorough-going interaction, engaged in relations of reciprocity, of attraction and repulsion. Part of your being then will consist in your likes and dislikes, you will move towards what you like and away from what you dislike. So in a way other beings are already coming into you, even while you are at a distance from them, they begin to define your identity. We can see a reflection here at

the second level of reciprocity of the characteristic modes of relating of our beings as embodied personalities. For as egos we are completely distinct from each other and we come together, so to speak, out of some momentary interest or alignment; here we are already being affected by the other at a distance and these are relationships of non-duality. If you are in unconditional love for something or with some being then that is already part of you and defines your personality. Even if your unconditional love is overlaid by the conditionality imposed by some other motive or arrangement there will still be an aspect of non-duality. So this is the mode of connection established in reciprocity by relations of attraction and repulsion. Insofar as we are bound together in one universe then there must be a force greater than mere attraction or repulsion, a binding force which balances the two and stops the repulsion outweighing the attraction. Or you could say that, as in some Indian commentaries, the cosmos is a divine play or *leela* in which the source of attraction, the fount of love which is god, throws up or repels in the moment of creation aspects of his own divinity only for them eventually, after reaching a furthest point, to embark on the return journey of reunion. In any way the important point here is that the connection is already becoming an internal one, the relationship involved in reciprocity is beginning to define a part of the being.

The third and deepest level or mechanism involved in the realm of non-duality is that in which the whole of the being or the other is actually a part of you; and you a part of them; and more generally in which every being in the universe is enfolded within every other being. Then what relationships of reciprocity you actually have depends on what parts of those other beings which are not you are, so to speak, awakened within you and you will be attracted to what you are like, what you like. At the level of transcendental identification you may become one with something you do not care for—you may utterly deplore the news on television but you totally understand it. In another context I have argued that if you are engaged in strategic action then it is essential to transcendentally identify, become one with your enemy. And of course your greatest enemies are within you. So you become one with, go into your heteronomies, blocks, constraints, fixations,

procrastinations or resentments, etc. For only by becoming one with it or them will you understand them and therefore be able to out-manoeuvre them. This is how a general deals with the enemy on the battlefield, by systematic reconnaissance, understanding if he can, the enemy better than the enemy understands himself. And this is actually what you have to do when dealing with many things like addictions. You kind of fool, dupe, out-manoeuvre yourself into a situation in which the non-addictive part of your personality can get the better or upper hand over the addictive part. So these three mechanisms involve increasing degrees of internality.

And it is the internal relationality of elements and beings which is most characteristic of the domain of totality. Before we get to that level of totality which is defined by generalised co-presence, we can make a differentiation between two forms of intensity of reciprocity. One element not present within another can be so essential to that other, though remaining external, as to be constitutive of its identity. This is the minimal definition of internal relationality. This is stronger than mere attraction or repulsion. So the first four mechanisms which we need to understand which ontologically bind distinct beings or aspects of beings together into a unity are:

1. Identification established between externally related beings.

2. Reciprocity, relations of attraction or repulsion between beings.

3. Internal relationality: strong attraction or repulsion so that one being becomes a part of the other being's identity.

4. Co-presence: actual enfolding of another being within some being.

4* Generalised co-presence: unfolding of all beings in a totality in all other beings.

This last is generalised co-presence which I have argued holds in the cosmos or universe and holds or binds the cosmos or universe as a whole. In our ordinary social life we experience all of these four/five kinds of moments of identification. But it is not difficult to see that the cosmos as a whole must be characterised by the strong fourth level, for there must be something in all beings which binds them together as a whole in virtue of which

they interact with each other and only each other, which connects them exclusively and necessarily with each other. That binding cohesive force is the ultimate level of being in the universe, which wraps round all other beings as the cosmic envelope. And at this level of being all beings must find their ground-state and in each being there is an ultimate ingredient which identifies and defines them at their most basic level as part of the cosmic envelope. Be that as it may, without being in our ground-states and indeed far removed from them we are capable of relationships of transcendental identification and, reciprocity with other beings.

The principles of reciprocity are:

(1) Identification.
(2) Action at a distance, via principles of attraction and repulsion.
(3) Inner action, via mechanisms of attunement, vibration, frequency, etc. in an enchanted world, i.e. in those dimensions of our world which dis-enchantment failed to theorise and which re-enchantment re-thematises (6R).
(4) Non-dual action at a distance in virtue of co-presence (it is ultimately through reciprocity as co-presence, at this fourth level, that all the other principles of reciprocity operate).

There are just a few more principles of the third level of totality which we need to discuss. Each item in the world, any thing or event, is at once *concretely singular* and at the same time *dialectically universal*. No two frogs or pens are exactly the same. The law of gravity never applies in exactly the same way to two bodies in different contexts. Whether we look at it from the side of universality or singularity we are always concerned with universale and singulars which are far more complex than anything philosophy has imagined. So every universal has to be specified, is only instantiated in virtue of its specific mediations and differentiations, the geo-historical trajectory of the particular it applies to; and even if two instances, be they thing or event, are identical in all other particulars, there will always be something which is always unique to them. Similarly no matter how unique an event or thing, you will always find something in terms of which it shares properties in common and a geo-history which is not entirely its own (world lines which interconnect or intersect), and

then just in virtue of being a thing or event it will share things in common with all others.

Then we need to understand the realm of totality in terms of systematic intra-activity; that is in terms of one thing affecting the inner being of something else, so our ideas of beings as modelled on billiard balls breaks down—no being is solid corpuscular, atomistic thing. All beings are filled with space, all beings have causal and internal relations with other beings, they intersect in their being so to speak. So we work our way towards a view of not a group but a whole and causality as not being an external relationship between two entities but holistic. In its most typical form holistic causality involves the efficacy of all elements in a whole on any other element and on the whole itself; and the efficacy of the whole on any element and on any relation between itself and the element. When we begin to apply these ideas to our understanding of events and things we can see that it is not at all clear what a thing is. We know from quantum physics that the phenomena identified there are not masses of events, but rather an event as a mass, ensemble, totality—we have to think in terms of distributions over space, or successions over time, of spreads. If I ask how many things there are in the room or what event is going on here the question is meaningless without a context. How do you begin to count a thing? What constitutes an event? Is an event a soldier going to the battlefield at the beginning of the first world war; or is it his firing his first round of ammunition; or is it the whole war itself? And then who exactly is fighting the war, is it a nation? A group of generals, an army, a people, a class, etc.? Our conceptualisation of such basic notions as thing, event, particular, universal are extremely crude and primitive.

So to understand an ontology appropriate for the social world we have to break with all our simplistic conceptions of being and we cannot, for example, take at face value such things as an opposition between a social system out there and a motivational complex in here. It is not clear that if capitalism is out there, it is also in here. In fact it obviously is in here, and by that I mean in each of us and all our relations.

There is one principle above all which must bind any totality together, that is the principle of unity which underlies all

unity—and that is the cohering, healing, uniting, de-alienating force of love. Love is the ground-state quality which binds the universe together. If one wanted a simple definition of god one would have to say that he was pure unbounded love.

I now want to briefly list and comment on seven main principles or themes of the 3L realm of totality:

1. Totality itself, presupposing in contra-distinction to an assemblage or mass, internal relationality between the elements, components or constituents of the totality.

Holistic totality is the principle that governs the mode of connection between the elements of such a totality.

Intra-activity as well as inter-activity, the intra-activity specifying something qualitatively different from external relationality or causal connection which leaves the entities causally connected unaffected.

Because we are living in one world, one cosmos, we must be connected in some way with each other and with all beings in that cosmos. The most basic principles of unification of making that cosmos one would be principles of external causal connection and, moving through to principles in which two beings came together and in that moment or aspect became one, unified. So the first conception of unity is a pretty weak one, consistent with objects existing independently, not containing anything of the other but in some way coming together and in that moment we would have the collapse of subject–object duality and the first mechanism of non-dual connectivity, namely transcendental identification. I become one with a frog that I look at and the frog becomes one with me. But I remain, so to speak, a free-standing individual independently of the frog, and I go about my life and the frog goes about its. But for a moment we come together. Or to take an example of more characteristically human interconnection, you listen to my words, you may not agree with them, but you understand them, but in that moment of understanding we become one. After that, we part and you go about your life and I go about mine. But for a moment we were in transcendental union with each other. Now we move on to a second mechanism of connection in the zone of non-duality.

At a deeper level we have, as just seen, principles of reci-

procity, including outer or overt and inward reciprocity—the former operating by principles of attraction and repulsion primarily, and the latter operating by principles of more subtle attunement, until at the limit of completely universal reciprocity we have generalised synchronicity.

Then there is co-presence which has a number of inflections which I have elaborated elsewhere, but here means the enfolding of another entity within the being of some entity; and under conditions of completely generalised co-presence then all beings will be enfolded in any one being. I have argued that this is in fact the case, that of course we are barely aware of most that is enfolded within us—what we can say is that only a potentially minute fraction has been so far awakened and they take the form of the powers (knowledges, virtues or skills, for instance) which we have to exercise the awakened potentialities in our daily life. When these powers are sufficiently present, or in a state of readiness, then we may call them tendencies$_1$, and when they are, so to speak, primed for action, then we make use of the differentiation that I essayed in *A Realist Theory of Science* where I called them tendencies$_2$. The difference can be put like this: you may have the power to speak French and that tendency$_1$ is built into you and will be exercised when appropriate; but your capacity or disposition to speak French is in a state of readiness, so to speak, prone to be exercised when you are actually in France, then it will be a tendency$_2$.

Under this general rubric are also principles of heterocosmic affinity and amplification (and condensation), reversal and inversion, etc. Finally there are principles of containment and reflection. Some of these principles will be discussed in Chapter 6, and more in Volume 3 of this study, when we fathom the depths of the enchanted world in some detail.

2. The minimum necessary condition for non-duality is transcendental identification in consciousness (which establishes a seventh zone of ontology), and for re-enchantment the collapse of the semiotic triangle which establishes the immediately meaningful nature of being so I can read it as a text and you can understand me without physical mediation (so establishing the existence of a sixth realm of ontology). It is important to appreciate that transcendental identification in consciousness is necessary

even for strategic action. Thus we could not have a duel between combatants without some degree of transcendental identification in consciousness—they must both know when and how to clash swords or whatever. And their duel must be governed by certain rules or conventions. And we have seen that all rules and conventions are ultimately sustained by the social solidarity, trust and commitment of people, be they participants in that activity or interactors with such participants.

3. We have already essayed a critique of the philosophical discourses of modernity, structured around egos, isolated atomistic individuals in oppositional relations to each other and set against an object world which they manipulate according to principles of instrumental or conditional reasoning, and governed by purely abstract analytical universal laws. Postmodernism is a reaction to this ideology, characteristic of the world of alienation and demi-reality. Critical realism, as hitherto developed, is the philosophy which sustains, through concepts such as dialectical universality and concrete singularity, principles of unification, in opposition to demi-reality, which can be employed to adequately describe the domain of relative reality. But what critical realism does not do is to show the ground of the unity and the emancipatory potential it sees.

MetaReality describes the zone of non-duality, in the modalities of ground or basis, mode of constitution and fine interior which underpins the realms of duality and the demi-reality of the world of dualism and split which dominates the world of relative reality and occludes its non-dual grounds; at the same time it articulates the principles of an awakening (thus 7A) in terms of which the world of relative reality in which we, as embodied personalities, must for the greater part of our existence subsist, can be liberated from the blocks and constraints characteristic and indeed definitional of the demi-realities which oppress us and in virtue of which we oppress ourselves.

4. Certain characteristic themes such as that of concrete singularity and dialectical universality also apply to relationships at the ground-state. Thus there is no reason to suppose that any two beings have exactly the same dharma or essential nature. Every being in its innermost essence may be unique, and we must assume

so. At the same time they are all dialectically interconnected in virtue of being located on a common cosmic envelope. In the same way principles of unconditionality may be shown to govern thought and behaviour stemming from non-dual swathes of being.

5. There are characteristic syntheses of self-realisation (which I will resume in Chapter 7) in virtue of which there are no oppositions between the antinomies characteristic of dualistic thought, such as between self-change and social change; or in spirituality and a commitment to practical transformation; between transcendence and immanence or ingredience; or between non-duality and this-worldliness.

6. A critique of concepts like subjectivity and objectivity. Awareness is always of a holistic field and susceptible to reflexivity that is situating itself within the field of awareness. At the same time objectivity exists and is constituted only in virtue of subjective activity. Then we have to view things and events in an entirely different way. Thus things have to be understood as constituted by and in virtue of absence, most obviously in the form of a space circumscribing or bounding them, but also in terms of space or emptiness in their interior; and at the same time they have to be understood as not only connectivities, that is as spread constitutions, but as themselves totalities operating according to their own internal relational teleologies and mechanics of holistic causality. And events have to be understood as coupled, paired and totalities themselves, intra-dependent and governed by relations of synchronicity.

7. The mechanisms that come into play in the world of re-enchantment will be described in Chapter 6, so I defer any discussion of them here, save to say that they involve all the principles already thematised, plus those additional ones which stem from a world which is immediately meaningful (and multiply so) and immediately valuable (right or wrong, good or bad, etc.); immediately spiritual in the sense of constituted by and grounded in and interiorised through non-duality; and evolving in an open-ended process, without any foreseeable end.

Chapter Five

The Yoga of Action and Effortless Efficiency

Established in Yoga, Perform Action—Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2 Verse 48
You are infinite. Nothing is so important as to know this truth—Paramahansa Yogananda

Section 1: Orientations on Right-action

Preliminary Remarks on Right-action

The fundamental rule in life or theorem for success is to be in your *ground-state:* the more you are in your ground-state, the more successful your action will tend to be, that is also to say that the more 'spiritual' you are, the more 'successful' in achieving your earthly goals (realising your intentionality) you will be (*ceteris paribus*—other things being equal). In your ground-state, you will be in your dharma, doing what you (and you uniquely) are best at doing, expressing your concretely singularised empowered embodied personality—acting:

1. effortlessly (that is with maximal efficiency, or least effort);[1]

[1] Thus the sun does not try to shine, it just shines; the flower does not try to

2. spontaneously;
3. unconditionally;
4. joyously.[2]

In your ground-state, acting from your dharma, you will transcend your *karma*, your education and circumstances, your genetic endowment, your ancestors, and, more generally, the presence of the past—in short you can transcend your 'fate'. So transcending in life (life being a dialectical learning process) you can move on, with greater freedom empowered by what you have learnt from the past and cleared of its pain, to a new round of discovery and freedom in the world—of relativity.

The theorem that unites being in your ground-state to success/abundance/fulfilment is:

Surrender to your ground-state, innocent of desire, and the cosmic envelope will tend to respond to your every need: that is to say, **inner submissiveness** is reflected in **outer responsiveness**. Or, this is also to say your inner responsiveness to your transcendentally real self, that is to your ground-state, will tend to be echoed in the outer submissiveness of the rest of the cosmic envelope. For, on the one hand, what you do will be more attuned to the rest of the cosmos; and, on the other, the rest of the cosmos will be more attuned to you. Every act from yoga, or union with your ground-state, will be at once a *transformation* of the world, an *offering* (or *yagya*—the origin of 'sacrifice') to the cosmic divine, a *gift* to your fellow beings (the rest of creation) and a *fulfilment* or realisation of your intentionality. Note that to have an intention you do not have to be in a non-dual state; the intention can be part of your innermost being, and constitutive of, or a consistent extension of, your ground-state—an intention is not an item in your mind, apart from your being, or even an item in

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bloom, it just blooms; the acorn does not try to grow into an oak, it just (*ceteris paribus*) does so.

[2] It is easy to see that these four attributes of effortlessness, spontaneity, unconditionality, joyousness are interrelated. Thus for example thought consumes energy.

your mind at all.[3] On the other hand, any intention not a part of, or inconsistent with, your ground-state will split your intentionality, limit or inhibit your efficacy and bind you karmically to the wheel of causality in linear time.

It is important also to appreciate that sometimes when you have a strong desire, a desire to which you are clinging, in order to fulfil the intentionality behind the desire you need to let go of the desire (that is of the desire for the anticipated result or consequences) in order for it to be realised. Indeed generally you must act intentionally without desire, that is attachment to results and consequences, if those desires or the intentionality they express are to be realised in the world. For desire splits the mind in activity and, even if satisfied, inevitably generates in its wake a sequence of further desires. This relates to another aspect of non-duality. If your intentionality is not to be split, a necessary condition for it to be fulfilled, your action must be focused, concentrated, engaged. This is *single-pointedness*; and when you are single-pointed in your activity and in a non-dual state, then you are in effect in a 'meditative' state in your everyday life, characterised by the fact that you are not attending to yourself or your state of consciousness, but that on which you are focused in the world. This something else in the world is however not something apart from your state of consciousness. Rather, it is your consciousness totally absorbed in what you are doing in the world, so that it is characterised by an absence of duality just as much as in the classical self-centred meditative stance. Your consciousness is not something apart from your activity, it is *in* activity. And in the holistic field of your awareness in activity, you are *in* the field of

[3] This allows us to criticise some treatments of 'fulfilling intentionality without desire (understood as involving attachment)', such as those which turn on the logic of Ritambhara, or the threshold of the non-dual state. Such treatments see intentionality as being expressed on the edge or at the junction between the dual and the non-dual zones and recommend an oscillation in and out of the non-dual state, in virtue of which the intention manifest in the dual state can be released with something like the force or energy of the non-dual state. Their treatments do not appreciate that intentionality can be expressed in non-dual activity flowing from one's non-dual ground-state, with the in-built intentionality a part of or continuous with one's dharma or intrinsic nature.

your awareness. And if you were not, your activity would be impossible.

Self-aware, you witness yourself in activity. Witnessing is not thinking of or about; it is non-dual reflexive (self-)awareness in activity. This is not an inferior or second-best form of transcendental consciousness—it just is transcendental consciousness aware of itself in activity. Moreover, it is something we all approximate (and must experience), in greater or lesser degree of awareness, if we are to do anything at all in everyday life. In fact as a skilled archer focuses on his target his consciousness becomes stilled, though his muscles may be tense, until, at (or very close to) the point of rest, the zero consciousness of his ground-state, he shoots. This null awareness is of course the silent witness or monitor, the consciousness of our ground-state, whether we are aware of it or not, present in and the condition of all our other excited states of conscious activity of our embodied personality. What is variable and qualified is not the non-duality of our spontaneous accomplished activity but our self-awareness in that activity and as we become more rooted in our ground-state, the capacity for reflexivity, self-awareness in activity expands and develops.

Now *in the moment of non-duality*, we access, so to speak, all the *qualities of heaven*, including timelessness or *eternity* and which Tagore liked to call the '*surplus*' supervenient on non-dual states or phases of being and activity, the *sat-chit-anand* or the joy or *bliss-consciousness of being*, which is another way of looking at what Hegel called '*the rose in the cross of the present*'. This is what I have characterised as the fine structure or deep interior of all existence, an interior which is not immediately obvious; but it is there to be experienced as the quiddity or Buddha-nature in all things and from which anything at all must ultimately derive its being.

Here the really important point to appreciate is that self-realisation is prefigured in every non-dual moment of your life. It is precisely continuous with your most quotidian states of transcendence or non-duality which we have seen underpin all action or social life. In the non-dual moment you are free of ego, mind or thought, emotional turbulence (aversion or attachment)[4] and

[4] And emotion just means 'disturbance'—which is why you should disengage

the blind tenacity of your belief in the complete (and exhaustive) physicality of your being (that is to say, that you are merely a physical being, and not also an emotional, mental, supramental and indeed spiritual one). You are totally now, in the presence of eternity; and totally here, at the point of infinity. You are only you, not you and not-you, something other than you. You are whole, one not two, no longer alien to yourself. You are clear, albeit possibly only for a moment or two, of the five main (or rather generic types of) blocks and constraints on your freedom. For it will be remembered that for self-realisation we need:

1. *no ego*;
2. *clear mind* or empty mind, that is as soon as and whenever possible, no-mind, unthought;
3. *pure heart*—no attachments or aversions, conditionalities or contracts;
4. *healthy* (energised, balanced) *body*, unencumbered with the clinging belief in the exhaustive physicality of being; and
5. *no residues* from the past, clear of unconscious determinations and karmic ties.

When these five conditions are satisfied, then we have a state of consistency in the embodied personality and the psychic being with the ground-state. Self-realisation, enlightenment or *satori* is the shedding of these levels of heteronomy.

Following it we have *prajna* or transcendental wisdom, which results in *sanyama* or maximal coherence, but though there is consistency with the ground-state and its consciousness, the consciousness of the embodied personality will not always or even necessarily very often be in a state of *samadhi* or ground-state consciousness. For such a being, though a non-dual being, will be necessarily engaged in (*a*) oppositional; and (*b*) dualistic activity in the world of becoming and development [cf. (*a*)] and of non-dual or unfree beings [cf. (*b*)]; and even its dharmic activity may need to be of the mindful rather than the mindless sort, and

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your emotions in activity. As a Zen master once told his pupils, whatever you do, *don't wobble*. You either throw yourself totality in your activity or disengage, inact.

will not necessarily be effortless.[5] A realised being, in his dharma, and without external resistance, will be in samadhi in action so samadhi does not mean that being in that state of consciousness is non-active, i.e. 'at rest'. But acquiring his dharma or encountering resistance, though he will be witnessing his activity, he will not be in samadhi. Thus there is **samadhi without satori** (e.g. in the meditations of an unrealised being) and **satori without**, or as involving only punctuated states of, **samadhi** (as in dualistic or other effortful activity).

These are also precisely the conditions for spontaneous right-action and, *ceteris paribus*, the fulfilment of your intentionality. This last point requires some qualification. For though your action will be spontaneously right and maximally coherent (and efficacious), whether your intentionality will actually be fulfilled depends not only upon (*a*) the removal of your own negative incompleteness or non-duality in being; but (*b*) the removal of all other beings' non-duality, or negative incompletenesses—at least all other beings who will affect the results of your action; and the clearing of the space or field of activity of the residues or consequences of the heteronomy.

Without (*b*), you will be *free*, but not *fulfilled*. However, your action will be the best it could be in the circumstances, and at the same time it will be maximally efficacious in promoting the realisation of the freedom of all beings everywhere and so the fulfilment of the deepest impulse of your own dharmic intentionality. It is just this gap of course which implies the commitment of the realised being or *devita* (angel) to action oriented to the realisation of all beings everywhere, i.e. to universal self-realisation (including of course the eudaimonistic society).

You do not thus have to abstain from action to be in your transcendental self, your ground-state. And to appreciate this is to appreciate also that the criterion of the efficacy of inaction, that is abstaining from action (at a particular level) as in classical meditation, must be assessed by the extent to which the feelings of bliss, energy, etc. associated with the transcendental state in

[5] This will depend upon the physiological and energetic state of the realised being concerned as well as other various circumstantial factors.

inaction (or in the absolute phase of existence) are carried through into heightened activity in action (or in the relative phase of existence). Notice that when we become masters of a particular form of non-dual activity such as driving a car, then we are also capable of engaging in action at another level. This does not spoil the non-duality of the basic action if we are really practised at that action. Moreover, we should be aware of fixating the distinction between the dual and non-dual. This can be phasic, complex, overlain and intertwined in various ways. Moreover, we have already seen that the non-dual state can vary in a number of respects, not least in depth, intensity and reflexivity.

However, this form of simultaneity or co-existence of non-dual and dual modes of activity provides one model for understanding how the transcendental self in transcendental consciousness can come to be aware of or witness itself in all its activities, whether they are non-dual or dual, in an expanding field of holistic awareness at or from its ground-state, in which non-dual states and phases of activity are recursively embedded within a continually expanding field consistent with and defined by that ground-state. In fact in general there is a dialectic of dialectics of inaction and shedding—inaction and watchfulness are necessary for shedding and shedding facilitates awareness and witnessing.

This can also be put in terms of the law or rule of coherence, clarity or purity—that is the absence of impediment or block or constraint or inconsistency within one's own being. Such coherence in being encompasses psychic, mental, emotional and physical or bodily being and entails also coherence or clarity in our intentionality, thoughts, feelings and physical actions (including thus in all our deeds, including all our words). Movement towards a position of total consistency will be characterised by dialectical or developmental consistency—that is the consistency shown by the growth of things in nature (such as an acorn into an oak or a tadpole into a frog), or the developing excellence of a person at a skill; this is the only kind of consistency we can aspire to in a world in which we must embrace change and becoming as essential to the being of our lives.

Information and energy will flow from the cosmic envelope to one's ground-state, endowing embodied personalities at one

with that ground-state with the best possibility of realising their intentionality. Of course even in this situation one's free will is maintained. Thus you must *listen* to your inner self, or the promptings of your intuition at the ground-state or intimations from the cosmic envelope in order to act in a maximally coherent way. Even listening is something that has to be learnt. Thus we can only listen in silence. Again silence is a skill, an excellence which may need to be acquired and practised, as in the practice of silence for a day or a week or whatever in monastic or non-monastic (to the extent that it is possible) communities. Moreover, in such silence our choice or discrimination will be guided by our intuitive rather than discursive intellect. Being in one's ground-state one will be maximally coherent in being, maximally creative in becoming, maximally loving in one's e-motivation, maximally right-acting, maximally perceptive or aware, and maximally successful in fulfilling one's intentionality.

There are ten features worth noting of spontaneous right-action. Such action is acting intentionally, but non-dualistically, basically, spontaneously, unconditionally, effortlessly and typically sustained in and by a matrix of practices of excellence which the agent has cultivated. (It is easy to forget that even such things as dressing were initially arduous exercises performed non-basically; and so for the relevant neophyte is quite properly regarded as a practice of excellence in which perfection is attained when the act can be performed in an effortless non-dual way.) The ten features of spontaneous right-action are:

1. Maximal coherence, flowing from the fact that one's ground-state is in synchronicity with the rest of the cosmic envelope, to which it is totally attuned.
2. Such action must be in the moment.
3. From where we are, with the resources at our disposal, on the basis of a true understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, our own specificities.[6]

[6] It follows from this that an action that is spontaneously right for one person will not be spontaneously right for another. For all persons, however, spontaneous right-action will be totally focused in the here-and-now of activity. Not split

4. Such action will be integrated, balanced and holistic, totalising; and in particular it will be action in accordance with the *golden mean*, steering the middle way between vices of excess (negative incompleteness) and deficiency (positive incompleteness).
5. Such action will be conducted from the standpoint of the principle of self-referentiality. It is only your response to the situation you are in, the only thing that you can immediately affect; and in present-centred awareness and acceptance of everything just as it is, without judgement or distortion, as to how it might have been otherwise, you should assume total responsibility for everything that has happened. For only in this way can you maximally empower yourself. Anything other than acceptance of total responsibility, any shifting of the blame on to another agent or the situation itself, immediately disempowers the agent, dualistically splitting and undermining his response.
6. Such action will be oriented beyond duality to the abolition of ail heteronomy, all master–slave relationships and to the ideal of universal self-realisation.
7. Such action will consist in shedding and will be oriented to simplicity: in particular the ideal expressed by Eckhart in which the agent 'has nothing, wants nothing and knows nothing'. There will be no attachment in such a state to any possessions, there will be no desires and all knowledge will be in-built into the being of the agent concerned. (This is what is meant by 'know nothing'.) So that his being is totally uncluttered. For it is only in a state of 'inner emptiness' or 'no-mind' that we can learn anything and it is only in such a state that we will be able to act with maximal pliability and flexibility to the promptings of the cosmic envelope. Any element of duality, such as an extraneous piece of information or knowledge (even a conception of god as other

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in time or space, between the present and the future or the past, as in attachment to consequences or past achievements (or failures—as in pride or remorse respectively); or split between the here and the somewhere else, e.g. where one's partner is, one's home, when one is at work, etc.

than oneself in one's mind), will set up a duality, and itself constitute an element of heteronomy which will split one's response to a situation, interrupt the flow of spontaneity and set up a prejudice or preconception which will limit the fluency of response to any situation and may well become fixated as a prejudice, preconception or attachment. The ideal of simplicity may also be taken into one's life itself—thus simplicity in the sense of absence of heteronomy does not mean the absence of differentiation, depth or diversity. On the contrary it is the only basis on which the latter attributes can develop. This inner emptiness is in fact the condition for maximal abundance, flourishing and enjoyment of life.

8. This will be action of an agent from a position of humility, willing to learn from everything that happens and every being in the universe; and to see such learning as an inevitable part of the process of embracing change and expansion into a greater totality (completeness, all-groundedness) which life entails.
9. Such action will be one which is oriented to and imbued with the ideal of co-presence, that is one in which 'the free development of each is seen to be a condition of the free development of all', in which there is no sense of separation between one's own being and the rest of the universe—in which indeed the criterion for assuming self-referentiality is just that action must always take the form of some change initiated by or within one particular embodied personality rather than another, that is the concrete singularity which individuates one in the physical world. Given this one acts in such a way as to maximise the self-realisation of all other beings in the universe; clearly this does not mean behaving in the same way to them all, not only because beings differ in terms of what constitutes their realisation, but also because of the differential relationships in which one stands to all other beings. The unity which is expressed in unconditional love is always a differentiated one; and its differentiation does not detract but rather is the condition for its unconditionality.
10. Such action will be focused, single-pointed, unconditional

and it will consist always in a giving. To act is always not only to transform the world but to give or present to another being. Such giving will be joyous, effortless, spontaneous and free. Such action will be dharmic, not karmic. The importance of joy means also that such giving will also be a capacity to receive and enjoy the fruits of being in the world—for this action will always be within a commitment to material embodiment, practical engagement and social realisation.

Section 2: Preliminary Considerations on the Principles of Spiritual Success

The principles that I discuss now will take on a different complexion whether they are understood in terms of the categories of being; of becoming; of becoming whole or taking shape; or of making, that is transformative praxis which is also giving or presenting or objectifying; or of reflexivity or reflection back from one's objectifications in the world; and whether they are given a specifically re-enchanted declension or not (corresponding to the 1M–6R successive refinements of ontology, and the five circles of creation, with their 6R extension or bypass).

The fundamental principles will always be the same, and they turn on the three modalities of non-duality, namely non-duality as basis or ground, as mode of constitution or reproduction (or transformation) of everyday life, and as fine structure or deep interior of every aspect of being. Thus:

1. the more you are in your ground-state the closer you will be attuned to the cosmos and the more likely, *ceteris paribus*, it will be that your intentions are realised;
2. the more single-pointed, focused, concentrated in your activity, the greater its duration or degree of non-duality, the more likely, *ceteris paribus*, you will be to succeed; and
3. the deeper you are in non-duality, the greater your penetration into the zone of non-duality, the more awake in, on, at, and with your consciousness or activity, the more successful, *ceteris paribus*, you will be.

These principles have been delineated in terms of the circle of becoming. They could be refined and redefined in terms of the other circles. So, in terms of the project of becoming, move into your ground-state in a way which prefigures it: that is embark on the dynamics of self-realisation, that is the expansion of self to Self in a maximally prefigurative way, that is along the path of non-dual or transcendental action, expanding the zone of non-duality in your life. As you become more in touch with your ground-state you will be able to shape and form your personality in a way which maximally and optimally expands it, so that your concretely singularised dharma, which is to love and express love for the rest of creation with which you are one, in your unique way, will become clear. Your project of self-realisation will take shape, in the circle of formation. As this is happening you will be acting in the world (because there is no way you can help but act, that is transform yourself and the world); and as you act, you will inevitably have to fall back from time to time on heteronomously acquired rules, if you cannot immediately access your ground-state and its intrinsic knowledgeability.

Two useful rules of thumb are:

1. avoid doing anything which harms yourself or other people to the extent that that is possible; and
2. avoid doing anything which causes an inner dissonance or tension or lack of ease within yourself.

These rules will exclude many actions. On the whole, however, the philosophy of metaReality is strongly oriented against any rule-based ethics, as already seen. For virtuous action flows from within; and any externally imposed set of rules will, especially if interpreted actualistically, not be right or appropriate for:

(*a*) all societies;
(*b*) all agents in one society;
(*c*) any agent in all sets of circumstances in any one society; or
(*d*) any agent at all in any situation which is novel or unique (and, to some extent, all situations will always be, in some degree both).

There will always be situations in which contravening the rule is right and situations for which no rule has been constructed or for which any rule would be straightforwardly wrong. Better therefore to practise skills and disciplines of excellence which will cultivate virtues and excellences within oneself; to keep oneself as empty and clear as possible, so that one can be single-pointed and open to new knowledge and as flexible as possible in one's action, in whatever situation, precisely because one is free of prejudgement, that is preconception or prejudice. In this way one will learn, perceive, assess and act optimally.

I now want to look at the laws of spiritual success considered from the point of view of categories of being. It would be tedious to go through the exercise of repeating them for the other categorial circles or stadia. Suffice it to say that with respect to the cycle of becoming or creativity that the most important thing here is the way in which the transcendentally real self, which may be conceived as parenting or nurturing the embodied personality, strikes a balance between (*a*) **sublative** or supportive spirituality in which the ego and qualities of self-esteem, assertiveness, independence, etc. are built up, and (*b*) **transformative** spirituality in which the aim is to shed all heteronomous sources of determination, that is all forms of determination inconsistent with what the person essentially is. This is of course a concretely singularised bundle of powers and energies in its ground-state cosmically connected and one with all beings in the universe, as such in no way separate from them but each of which have their own distinctive point of agency, that of their embodied personality, their own actualised ensemble of powers, and their concrete singularity, which is to be dialectically recognised and universalised in the ground-states of all.

As for the circle of formation the great expanding force here is, as we have seen, *love*, and moving along any of the radiating circles of love will draw us nearer to that point of union which is the source of union or indeed one could say union itself on the cosmic envelope, in which one is just ultimately creative, intelligent, loving, activity. This love will always be singularised or differentiated, that is displayed in sensitised solidarity, oriented to the self-realisation of others which one's ground-state can no more

engulf, though it does enfold, than one could be engulfed by any other object in the world. Unity is not suffocation (engulfment or enclosure)—the very concept of unity, like that of transcendental identification, depends upon the distinctness of the singularities that are to be brought into unity or identified. The concept of unity or identity makes no sense without uniqueness and difference; therefore discrimination and tolerance are essential to all manifestations of love or unity just as it is a necessary condition for the intelligibility of a state of non-duality. No-one would bother to say that a single thing was non-dual. Even the reflection in the mirror must be optically or physically distinct from what it reflects. Indeed the whole point of reflection is precisely because the creative agent needs a confirmation of, which must be external to, himself, if that confirmation is to succeed.

Before I list and comment on these principles or rules, let me just rehearse some of the arguments for being in one's ground-state, which I have been advocating.

1. Accessing the cosmic envelope allows more efficacious, creative and successful activity, normally in any and every domain.
2. Grounding oneself at the level of the cosmic envelope results in what is probably the best way of ensuring lasting material and earthly success in life. We have seen that this grounding depends upon combining accessing one's intuition and clarity, coherence or purity in being and acting. In general this accessing of intuition and process of shedding will depend on cultivating the virtues in time-honoured ways, virtues which may be regarded as practical dispositions to spontaneous right-action. This is not only the best way of achieving one's goals and objectives in ordinary life, but we have seen that anything other than action consistent with one's ground-state will automatically split one's intentionality, energy and consciousness, so that, paradoxically, self-realisation is the only goal that can definitely be achieved.[7]

[7] Enlightenment can of course be spontaneous or very suddenly achieved—in this case one must assume that it has already occurred before (e.g. in a previous life). It is also quite arguable that enlightenment should be conceived of as a

3. It is the best way to hasten the evolution of matter, life and mind; and in particular of social forms (in what I have called four-planar social being, which must here be generalised, in accordance with expanded energetic and enchanted ontology). In this way it is the best, and probably the only way to the achievement of what I have called a eudaimonistic society, in which the free development of each is a condition for the free development of all; and it is also the best, and probably only, way to achieve theosis, or the goal of universal self-realisation.
4. It is the only way to (*a*) save our planet; and (*b*) to ensure the survival (or at least prolong the life) of our species, as existing on this planet. The reason for this is of course because the huge disjuncture between our outer and our inner development, that is the development of our technology on the one hand, and the development of our moral sensibility and more generally our virtues and our consciousness, on the other is of such a tremendous disparity that it threatens the development, and even the continuation, of both.

Section 3: The Principles of Abundance or Success

What I am going to do is list and comment on twelve laws of spiritual success. These are principles, rules or laws for fulfilment or lasting success: that is rules for flourishing, abundance, etc. or spiritual conditions—that is laws for spiritual and material success.

The twelve laws of fulfilment or of spiritual and earthly success are:

1: **The law of the (unlimited) self**
Pursue the dialectics of inaction to access the ground-state of pure potentiality

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process, not an end state (and also that even if it is seen as an end state, in the sense of an achievement, it is potentially always subject to deepening, rounding, etc.).

2: **The law of self-knowledge**
Know your self—who/what you really are and want to be—your dharma;
and then change (work on) your self to become only and truly what you really are
3: **The law of listening**
4: **The law of coherence [or Sanyama]**
5: **The law of giving**
6: **The law of karma**
7: **The law of least effort**
8: **The law of intention without desire [or attachment]**
9: **The law of detachment**
10: **The law of balance—'the middle way' and integration**
11: **The law of letting go [and inaction]**
12: **The law of dharma**

I now discuss these laws individually, in some detail.

Law 1: The Law of the (Unlimited) Self

In this law we pursue dialectics of inaction to reach and access, and hopefully stabilise, the deepest, most essential level of our being, that is the level of the ground, of pure potentiality, of infinite correlation, the level of the envelope present in ourselves, where it is concretely singularised as our own specifically differentiated and geo-historically mediated human nature, but present also in the totality of the rest of the universe. As we have already seen, accessing and acting from the ground-state, on the cosmic envelope, that level within us of pure potentiality or unbounded, infinite possibility, we become at once autonomous or free (in the sense of eliminating negative incompleteness) and, potentially cognisant of the alethic truth of all other beings in the world. Accessing, and even more acting from the ground-state, this level of pure potentiality thus becomes something of great significance.

Now the philosophy of metaReality shows that and how we must access it all the time; and how potentially we can come to witness this access. But to witness our routine access we must

be grounded in the awareness and perspective of the witness, the transcendental monitor of the ground-state. However, even if our life activity is organised at the level of the ground-state, there will be periods of intense dual, and even dualistic, activity, in which we will need to deliberately re-access that ground-state consciousness and make it the awareness of our embodied personality. We have already seen some of the ways in which we access it:

> In silence, in meditation, prayer or worship; in the gap, hiatus or space between thoughts; more generally, in 'unthought' and 'non-ego'; in nature; in that loss of the sense of separation from the rest of being, and the corresponding loss of a sense of a separate ego that one finds when listening to music or totally becoming one with any other object or aspect which delights, engulfs or enraptures one. One can touch it in many other emotional or cognitive states—for example the state of 'being-in-love'.

I have also argued that scientists, at precisely the moment of scientific intuition, the moment of 'eureka' (the 'aarh' of 7A) access and touch it, as the first glimpse of the alethic truth of the reality they are trying to synthesise. What is most important here to stress is that we achieve or access this level of pure potentiality, this level of the unlimited self, in the space between thoughts—it does not come from thought, nor is it as such a feeling, nor a bodily movement. Of most importance to us here is the way in which it bypasses or passes through the space between thoughts. The attitude we need to inculcate here, for access to this gap or space, which enables access to the ground-state or alethic truth, not only of our being but of all being, is to practice non-judgementalism. That is we try and suspend thought and particularly judgement. For judgement interferes with access to the essential self, itself consumes (and wastes) energy, squeezing the gap, that space from which all our creative energy flows.

It is at the level of this ground-state of pure potentiality, the level of the unlimited self, that inner realisation will be tendentially reflected in outer fulfilment or achievement. This inner submission to the alethic truth within parallels the notion of surrender (*yagya*) to the divine. But in this case it is not a surrender to an

external divine but to an immanent ingredient within, indeed at the very core of one's own being.[8]

This inner submissiveness, entailing responsiveness and alignment or attunement with the rest of the cosmic envelope, should not be regarded as something which is imposed on the self. Rather, it is the doing of the will of the self by the personality—and only appears as something alien to oneself if one misidentifies oneself with one's ego—that which we need to detach, to lose, for the full realisation of our spiritual personality and the achievement of our practical earthly success and fulfilment in life. It reflects the victory of non-duality over demi-reality for the realm of the embodied personality, in the field of relative existence. Here it is just worth stressing that one cannot properly see or think in terms of spiritual fulfilment unless one sees this as practically materially embodied here on earth, so long as one is living in an embodied form. Anything other than complete embodiment and total engagement in everyday life is itself a form of incompletion and heteronomy, thus limiting the limitless potentiality of our unlimited selves.

At this point, the level of the unlimited self or that of unbounded potentiality, we have *subject-referentiality*, not *object-referentiality*. At this level being, and the action it generates, is *love-based*, not *fear-based* and, as such, it is also Self-imposed, not ego-driven. It is real (*alethic*) and comes from the heart; not illusory or *myopic* (that is desire-driven or object-attached). It is spontaneous and effortless, and not a product of instrumental thinking or reasoning (conditional or means–ends thinking or analytical [left-brain thought]).

I will be relatively brief with the next four laws, because I have already gone into them in some detail and I will return to them later. I just briefly note and comment on them here.

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[8] This surrender or submission to the divine is regarded within many spiritual traditions (e.g. Sufism in Islam) as an absolute necessity for any spiritual development, or even a condition of the normal religious life. More esoterically surrender is regarded as the price for union (yagya as the price for yoga), that is love for, knowledge through and service of the divine. This is gnosis.

Law 2: The Law of Self-knowledge

Inscribed on the doorway to the oracle at the temple of Delphi was the motto: know thy self and thy will, know the Gods and the universe. The law of self-knowledge expresses this-perfectly. When you know what you really are and want to become, then you know your dharma. You then change (and work on) your self to become only and truly what you really are.

Now we already know that in our essence we are (concretely singularised) unlimited selves. But at the moment we are not only or completely this: we are much else besides, which has to be shed, and we are not fully it. That is, we do not fully manifest our true nature at all levels of our physically embodied being. This includes lack or incompleteness at the level of more subtle, as well as more gross, more obviously bodily (or material) states, that is a lack of refinement or development at for example more subtle levels of consciousness and being. And it cannot be stressed enough that consciousness is a causally efficacious aspect of human being, without which our material transactions in the world, including our social interactions with others, would be literally impossible.

Law 3: The Law of Listening

When we want to know what to do if we stick at the level of thought or intellectualisation, ratiocination alone, then we will normally find ourselves surrounded by conflicting pieces of evidence, a multiplicity of conflicting opinions from authorities and interests of various types. The situation is no better when you look or listen within, at least in the first instance, for you will normally have internalised these conflicting voices; and, even if you have not, you will be swayed by the multiplicity of your own interests, desires and prejudices/preconceptions—this is the internal chatterbox, the confusion of voices.

There must however be an assumption, of a level of alethic being or truth, which is our own deep, or essential self; this is the self, whose loving, creative spontaneity is everywhere in social life tacitly presupposed. At this level, which is the level in which we access our essential, unlimited selves, we reach an envelope, characterised inter alia by consciousness, which constitutes also

the alethic truth or divine essence of all other beings in the universe. This is god as the ubiquitous ultimate ingredient, the essential envelope present in all things. As we access our transcendental consciousness at the level of the cosmic envelope, we can, ipso facto, also access the alethic truth of all other beings. In this way, we come to have knowledge of god and all other beings in the universe, in their deepest essential nature (and therefore in principle in the totality of their developed forms).

This envelope is just what can be called the supramental level of being—supramental because it lies beyond or between thought (or mind), typically, as I argued being accessed in the space or gap between thoughts, in the silence of meditation or unthought generally. If there is one thing which the supramental is characterised by, it is, of course, experience, including conscious experience in our case, and as such, we can talk about a supramental state which underpins the unity we attribute to things when we can only empirically ascertain them through discrete sense organs, so it is the supramental sense which underlies all the other senses—this is the true meaning of the 'sixth sense'. If in accessing the supramental state we can come to know the cosmic envelope, and as such god and all other things, then at the very least we can come to know ourselves. In fact we come to know, as the inscription on the temple at Delphi suggests, we only come to know these other things through accessing our knowledge of self, which in a way reflects the totality of being.

At this level of cosmic consciousness, consciousness of the cosmic envelope, we are connected to everything else. It is this level which we touch in transcendence and it is the potential of 'knowing all' that, in accessing the cosmic computer, is touched. Just as action from the ground-state, the supramental or transcendental level of consciousness is spontaneously right, so cognition (and perception) is immediately true, 'beyond fault', with spontaneous right knowledge, spontaneous right vision, etc. paralleling spontaneous right-action from the ground-state. Knowing from this level is just knowing—knowing, so to speak, without blinking.

So self-knowledge is not just an assumption, it is a presupposition of everything that we do. How come then is it so

difficult to know ourselves? We know that at the level of the unlimited self there is self-knowledge, but in accessing that level we are subject to the noise and interference of a divided, unfocused, non-single-pointed consciousness, that is a consciousness which has not tapped single-pointedly its own alethic truth, and thence (allowing it single-pointedly), ipso facto, to access, at least in principle, the truth of all other things. But we do know what to do, we do know what we want and we do know how things are with us, including our relationship to all our activities, at the deepest level of our being.

We know it all—and no one knows it better than we do. In order to access this self-knowledge we have to cut out the interference, dissipation and dispersion of energy resulting from heteronomous motives and sources of determination, glued to the conditionalising world of ego-attachment and attached to the outcomes of its desires, fears, wants and preconceptions. What we need to do is to get rid of that noise and interference. This will take us into the fourth law—the law of clarity or coherence.

But it is important to note that the *inner mentor* also needs *outer confirmation*.[9] Thus the novice or disciple will often ask the initiate or adept to confirm his or her own intuition. Then, we practically need, at a very human level, the confirmation that is given to us when our inner listening, our inner mentor is reflected in outer fulfilment, happiness and success—as, sooner or later, it will be, when we touch the ground of pure potentiality, the cosmic envelope in which we inhere and to which every other being also succumbs.

Law 4: The Law of Coherence [or Sanyama*]*

We know this already as the law of purity—in our activity and in our being. It is purity in our being which is of course primary, but the only way to achieve it is through our activities (comprising both dialectics of inaction and dialectics of action)—activities such as cultivating the virtues, which are dispositions to spontaneous right-action or perception. This law of purity is at once

[9] As Wittgenstein and Ryle stressed, inner acts needs outer criteria.

also, besides being a law of coherence and clarity, a law of simplicity and single-pointedness. Moreover, it delineates the object of the dialectic of shedding: namely the shedding of heteronomous orders of determination, excess baggage, attachments, conditionalities, egos, negative emotions and instrumentalist, more generally exclusively analytical, reasoning.

Above all the virtue that is cultivated here[10] is that of single-pointedness, including attention, concentration and non-dual focus either in a mindful or a mindless mode:

(*i*) in activity generally;
(*ii*) in accessing the transcendent— (*a*) for activity and/or
(*b*) for spiritual development, or enlightenment;
(*iii*) in a state, at the junction between the gap and thought, that is, at the threshold of the transcendent, when we release intentions, from the deepest possible ground, on to the responsive, enveloping world.

Law 5: The Law of Giving

Purity in being having been obtained, and being stabilised in the ground-state of pure potentiality, we are now able to act in a spontaneously right and perceive in a maximally clear (clear-voyant [i.e. seeing clearly]) way.[11] What do we do, in our transformative praxis? We present something new to the world—we give a present or gift to the world, in that present moment of practical awareness. Doing is therefore presenting or giving. And what the enlightened being will do is to do spontaneously, that is without the mediation of prior thought, and in doing, give unconditionally, that is in a way which binds neither himself nor the being to whom he gives.

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[10] Each law will be associated with one or more virtues and as the laws them selves are all dialectically, holistically (that is lawfully) interconnected, so their virtues will be—this is the transcendental unity of the virtues.

[11] This is straight-through action, unmediated by heteronomous interests and motives, and straight-through perception, penetrating the mists of illusion and the clouds caused by attachment.

Put another way the law of giving says that what we should give above all is love and in giving we give unconditionally and spontaneously to other beings and the totality in the world. We do not, having tapped the ground-state of infinite correlation, merely rest in its sweet repose, enjoying the delights of its bliss, we engage in embodied practical activity in the world.

There are two important rules to bear in mind here:

1. law of reciprocity, which can be glossed as like attracts like, so that we should give what we want;
2. the constitution of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope on which love can be understood as the essential binding force of the universe, so that it is sufficient unto itself; with love, if it is pure and unconditional, attracting no karma.

Let us look at this in greater depth. We need to know what it is that we want and we best achieve what we want by giving it. The principle here is that you learn to give that which you seek. We have already seen that all the norms that I detailed in the introduction—from truth to peace—can be seen in terms of energy; and the job of emancipation or liberation is to free fixated or stuck energy, that is to transform it in a negentropic way, that is into unbound energy, capable, from the ground of pure potentiality, of flowing infinitely and in a limitless way, in response to the promptings of our limitless selves.

This is reflected in the etymology of words such as abundance, affluence and currency. Learning to give what you seek activates the law of karma, and the resonance of reciprocity, so that, *ceteris paribus*, the more you give, the more you get. The more you give with love, unconditionally and spontaneously, the more you achieve, from the space of infinite correlation, the ground of potentiality, the level of your unlimited self. It is not only important to give, to present, but to present it from the purist (most unconditional) of motives, for if you present a gift from a standard point of heteronomy, then you will receive in exchange for that gift, rebounding on you like a boomerang, that heteronomous interest with which you have sullied your gift. Learning to give is also learning to receive, the gift of giving to others.

Law 6: The Law of Karma

> *Karma is the eternal assertion of human freedom . . . our thoughts, our words, and deeds are the threads of the net which we throw around ourselves.*
>
> —Vivekananda

The law of karma is the law of cause and effect. When we cause something to happen, insofar as it is the result of our intentional agency, then we choose something to happen. The object here is therefore to become *aware* of our choices. We have seen that in principle we have access to the ground of our choices; what we have to do is actively participate in the process of self-consciously *witnessing* our choices. So the first thing is to bring choices within the span of our consciousness or awareness.

Then we need to ask, what are the consequences of this choice? Will it bring happiness to me and others? How do we know the answer to this question? We access our own self-knowledge—we ask ourselves the answer to the question. In fact if we do this we can feel it, even feel it physically (experientially), for example in our solar plexus (here we talk about gut-feeling) or in our heart. The inner mentor, who is at the level of the envelope, the ground of pure potentiality, will answer the question for us. The question is whether we choose to listen, i.e. to bring it to the level of consciousness; and whether we choose to listen to it and it alone, that is to ignore the babble of voices (the chatterbox or internal conversation), that is to eliminate the interference or noise generated by heteronomous motives, determinations and interests.

There is an important volitional element here—if we want something, say enlightenment, strongly, clearly and one-pointedly enough, then we will know what is the right thing to do. This principle applies irrespective of the praxis or project in question. It is often said, 'how can I choose—there are so many voices, opinions which are going on within my self?' The answer is: yes, but there is only one hearer. Though there are (or may be) a plethora of voices, there is just one hearer (or listener) and you are this hearer, that is exactly the self who must choose. And you learn to listen to the you who is the sole hearer of your many

voices, the sole/soul bearer of your self. In principle then all we have to do is eliminate all other interests and motivations than the one which we are single-pointedly focusing on.

We can now see more clearly that the law of clarity, purity or coherence is just single-pointedness, which is consistent with balance, equilibrium, equipoise and a multiplicity of outcomes for any single-pointed act. For this standpoint of single-pointedness, of clarity or simplicity of intention, if the intention is to take us to the ground-state of pure potentiality, the supramental state of awareness, and if this is our only intention and we are totally committed to it, then we must know what it is that we must do to open ourselves to the level of Platonic anamnesis. For this will in principle include the self-revelation of the truth of all things so that we will no longer be in a state of ignorance or heteronomy. We will now have surrendered our ego for our soul—and we will be able to see each aspect of our personality impersonally, that is objectively or universally, or from a universal standpoint, that is one of reflexive or second-order distanciation.

In that very gesture we will surrender our ego-attachment for the sake of the whole, that is the standpoint of the totality; and we will accept everything just as it is, we will renounce desire and wanting, adopting an absolute relationship to life, one of total commitment, in which the momentum to repetition, the attachment to the known and the past, is replaced by a momentum to liberation, autonomy, spontaneity and unconditional giving—that is an attitude of empowerment, responsibility and commitment.

We will adopt an enlightened relationship to time—we will stop waiting, procrastinating, living neither in the future, for a situation or set of circumstances in which everything will be alright, nor in the past, either as the time of nostalgic retreat from the present or as the source of the repetitive patterns and syndromes which it has set up. We will live in life-centred present-moment awareness. To live *in* the present-moment does not mean to live *for* the present-moment. Moreover, we will not identify our inherently limited thoughts or negative feelings with the true nature of ourselves.

Indeed at the end of the day you have nothing. For there is

no 'you'—no longer you as ego—to have something; there is just you as you are; and you 'have' no possessions—you are unattached, you have surrendered/given/passed them on to the divine. You no longer *have* anything—you no longer 'have', you just *are* your unlimited self. Indeed you do not even 'have' yourself—you just are a manifestation of the divine. This is the true meaning of the second rule above: namely that love is sufficient unto itself. In the end we are nothing but concretely singularised bundles of love.

So there is an internal criterion for testing what to do—does it provide a feeling of peace and harmony, which may even be reflected in a physically locatable sensation, or does it set up dissonance?

There are three not incompatible responses to karma: we can pay or discharge it; we can pay and learn from it—that is transmute it alchemically into a part of the dialectical learning process of life, continuingly presenting us with challenges, obstacles and opportunities to surmount; or we can transcend it—from the gap.

Law 7: The Law of Least Effort

When you are in your dharma what you do you do effortlessly, in virtue of your intrinsic nature. Thus the sun doesn't try to shine, it just shines. From the standpoint of your dharma, that is operating from your own concretely singularised nature, and that of your unique (concretely singularised) purpose in life, what you do will be maximally evolutionary (as well as momentarily optimal) for your self and the rest of being. Operating from your dharma, you will spend less energy: 'Do less and accomplish more'—least effort—motivated by love, at the level of alethic ground, results in activity with least interference and to maximal effect. There are three components of the law of least effort:

1. Acceptance—accept everything as it is.
2. Assume responsibility—it is not the situation in the world, but your response to it which matters, and your response to it can be optimal both for you and the rest of being.
3. Assume a posture of defencelessness—offer no resistance. This

is surrender, close to ahimsa or principled non-violence, generating joy.

Law 8: The Law of Intention Without Desire [or Attachment]

Energy and information is ubiquitous in nature. And human beings are just localised disturbances in the large quantum field of the universe, which in a way is their external organic body. However, human beings are unlike (most of) the rest of the universe we know, in that we can consciously change the energy and information content in the region of our own person and so causally affect the energy and information content in our environment and the world. This is the causal agency of consciousness.

Conscious change can be brought about by two qualities inherent in consciousness:

1. Attention (on the object of thought)—which energises.
2. Intention which transforms, that is organises its own fulfilment, producing changes in the objects of attention—at the level of the envelope, the ultimate ground, by introducing an intention into the field of infinite correlation.

What is essential to produce this affect—the ripple in the wave of infinity—is the combination of life-centred present-moment awareness and pure intentionality, that is desire without attachment, that is neither attachment to the past, with its consequent momentum of karmic repetition, nor attachment to the future, with its orientation to consequences and results; and neither attachment to the ego nor attachment to outcomes, in this case our attention will be one-pointed and focused precisely on the object of activity and our intentionality will be released into a field in such a way that binds neither us nor any component of that field to a preset schema. So what are the rules for success:

1. Slip into the gap, the space between thoughts, access the transcendent.
2. In that state of being, release your intention (that is desire without attachment to the outcome) at the junction between the gap and thought.
3. Remain in a state of self-referral—that is do not dissipate

your energy by sharing your intention or insight, at least in an undiscriminating way, with others; that is to say when you have a good idea or plan, retain or hold your energy in, for it takes time (and secrecy) to develop a new idea or produce a radical change generally.[12]

4. Relinquish any attachment to or concern for the outcome—live in the wisdom of uncertainty. The wisdom of uncertainty is just the wisdom of 'ignorance'—of 'bliss'.[13] Refuse to be determined by the known (for the known, the already manifest just is the past); enjoy the moment of the present.
5. Let the rest of the universe, or rather the infinite ground-state of pure potentiality, the cosmic envelope, handle the details.

Law 9: The Law of Detachment

Attachment in fact reflects loss, an inner emptiness, not in the sense of clarity but in the sense of *dukkha* or lack, that is limitation, incompleteness and the lack of abundance or plenitude. It will always take us away from the present, from the moment, from where we are and the situation as it is, including the resources at our disposal; from integration, non-duality, the spontaneity of right-action manifest in unconditional love and orientated to the abolition of ills and injustices and from a life of autonomy, simplicity (in the sense of coherence, that is plenitude [not simplicity in the sense of lack]) and peace, beyond duality to the transcendence of all oppositions and the attainment of fulfilment in life.

In attachment, what we are attached to is in fact always symbols, because the thing itself, once it is consumed, cannot, or cannot continually, be repossessed; attachment is normally formed below the threshold of consciousness, is desire-based and founded

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[12] Thus it is not necessarily a good idea for the brightest postgraduate students to share their creative insights, their discoveries with their 'elders' and betters, that is their supervisors and teachers. For even if they do not purloin these ideas they will banalise them and in this way prevent a potentially great plant from growing, even before it has been seeded.

[13] This also shows the difference between wisdom and knowledge.

on fear and insecurity; attachment is always to the known and the past; it orients itself against creativity, novelty, the enjoyment of surprise, pliability, flexibility. Opposed to attachment is the negentropic transform—we transform frozen, fixated, replicating, stuck energy into an unbound form. Reflecting fixation and repetition are the categories of the left brain, of analytical discourse and reasoning, underpinned by reification and commodification, reflecting the alienation of a multiply sundered world. In a state of detachment we are, on the other hand, restfully alert, for we do not try to do things, we just do them, allowing ourselves to be surprised by the way in which letting go of attachment will result in the spontaneous organisation of the field of unbounded possibilities, of infinite correlation in a maximally beneficial way, for each and all.

Law 10: The Law of Balance—'the Middle Way' and Integration

This is 'the middle way': balance is the golden mean, that is the virtue between any two vices, one of excess and the other of deficiency—both signifying lack or incompleteness, and therefore the absence of balance or equilibrium, so that they are not self-sustaining (cf. the ecological-life critique). This is the via media, closely connected with one-pointedness in the moment or mindfulness.

Here we have the theme of the unity, balance, co-existence (externally or internally) and co-presence and mutual entailment and transmutation (transformative implosion) of opposites, or more generally, of heterocosmically related dyads (or polyads), which is consistent with the priority/dominance/asymmetric causal efficacy, manifestation, weight or charge of one, rather than the other, of a pair, or aspect of a totality. This is the yin within the yan, which balances and sustains it (and vice versa).

This will include balance of the relative and the absolute, and is consistent with one-pointedness of intentionality and life projects. It is important to stress this because even if one has the single aspiration to enlightenment, one still has to live an engaged, embodied, practical life in the complexly configurationally shifting world of everyday reality; of course, one can live from the standpoint of the transcendent, as the ground-state, and

still act in an all-rounded, totalising way along a multiplicity of meridians, through a plurality of practices. The aim is to be still (quiet) in busy-ness or activity. The unity of the virtues is one aspect of balance—the virtues which underpin and sustain (and over-reach) the variety of ethical codes. Balance in activity and being entails integration and integrity. This means one acts in a totalising way without duplicity, self-deceit or split.

Law 11: The Law of Letting Go [and Inaction]

This law of letting go includes inaction (including omission, i.e. not doing). But let us first look at some other senses in which we have already used the idea of 'letting go'. The aim is to learn to let go, to give up/eliminate/shed heteronomous determinations. In intentional practice we let go in another way—that is releasing, sending out, or our unattached desires, that is our intentions on the threshold of the ground-state. In defencelessness, we offer no resistance. In yagya we surrender all to the divine. These are all senses of letting go which we have already theorised, but in one's intentional praxis it is also very important to know when to take the pressure off one's self and others to inact, i.e. to abstain from action (omit), or reduce the level of activity. It is in this sense that I want to thematise letting go.

Law 12: The Law of Dharma

Life is an individually designed obstacle course, which you have chosen. What is it that you want to achieve? Dharma has a multifold meaning:

> What is your intrinsic nature?
> What is your purpose?
> What is your duty/duties (obligations to others)?
> What is your evolutionary project?
> What particular challenges, obstacles, etc. are you surmounting?

If life is about acting, that is what I am to *do*, which is a question of how I am to *give*, and is always also a *transforming*, that is an *absenting* [absences] as well as a *presenting* [presents] and always in the present, punctuated by absence. We have to understand

then that agency is always grounded in an analysis of the self. This is what the law of dharma is all about—our concretely singularised, but limitless, self. Thus everyone should understand that we are all spiritual but embodied beings, with unique talents which we alone can express, and which we are here to give, i.e. to present to humanity in an embodied and engaged way.[14]

Section 4: General Considerations on the Principles of Abundance or Flourishing

There are some general considerations or points which need to be reiterated here:

1. In our criteriology, the priority of purity of being to purity of action is two-way: wrong-action can/must indicate defective/incomplete being; and incomplete being is (or maybe) shown in wrong-action (while right-action may indicate plenitude in being).
2. Dialectical universalisability is a result not a criterion or test of right-action—that is action from the ground-state of being, the symphonic-orchestral level of infinite correlation (in which we are like a concerto soloist in a grander orchestral setting).
3. Our criteriology must be expanded to include:
   (*a*) Do not consciously do what you know to be wrong
   (*b*) Do not consciously do what you know will hurt (oppress or manipulate) others or yourself.

It is important to appreciate that the categories are **real** (categorial realism)—they are not just (or even, i.e. not at all) a matter of **thinking**, let alone 'left-brain' affairs—they are a matter of **being**. But we can come to see, act, think in an appropriate categorial way. For instance we can begin to think, act and be in 1M-7Z/A

[14] Marx said that to be is to suffer. This was a problem for Buddha, which his eight-fold path is designed to resolve. Be that as it may, here the emphasis is on acting as giving and being as from an infinite sea of pure potentiality. To give is therefore never to lose but to refill at a higher level of infinity the infinitude of Dasein.

or MELDARA terms. Thus we must think/see coherence (cohesion, co-inclusion and holding/healing); holistically, relationally, contextually, configurationally in terms of four-planar social being, suitably generalised, 1Mishly, in n-dimensional/multiple, energetic[15] and enchanted/semiotic/cybernetic terms. Then again we begin to think/act/see metaphorically and metonymically, acting at one level to produce an effect at another level, or to complete the clearing of a situation at all levels. Again thinking reflexively—seeing yourself in the picture—otherwise the picture is incomplete; and being capable of seeing yourself objectively, in a detached, impersonal way. More generally, thinking reflexively ties in with the standpoint of subject-referentiality.

Again we need to think, act, be, see dialectically—that is the negative in the positive and vice versa; the co-existence of distinctions and connections; of concrete singularity and dialectical universalisability; of learning from life, of how to transform our transformative practices.

We begin to see every quality as potentially—indeed even actually—enchanted, meaningful, significant; and as there to teach us, as teleological. We begin to see each aspect in different ways, to combine these ways; to see multiple configurations in each combination. We test putting a situation or totality in a reverse or different gear; we counter-habituate, shake the kaleidoscope, practise reciprocity, mutuality and totality. We need to transform our understanding of the world to consciously visualise situations which run contrary to left-brain analytical categorisations, reflecting the Newtonian mechanical universe or, even further back, an Aristotelian-medieval world view. For it is important to see that categories, subjectively or as classifications of systems, spontaneously reflect the way in which we see, think, feel, interpret and act in the world. How do you categorise or think silence or the ground-state or envelope of infinite correlation?

We need to think in terms of the emotions; and of the emotions both personally and impersonally (we all experience fear) and of the emotions categorially, as constitutive of being. We need

[15] Cf. the quantum field as energy and information.

to think energetically/dispositionally/transcendentally; processually dialectically—in terms of the categories of emptiness, both as lack and incompletion and in terms of the dynamic plenitude of the void; holistically; agentively; and reflexively.

There are some further considerations which are worth noting here. These may take the form of supplementary principles or corollaries of laws 1–12. Thus the standpoint of seriousness, verses Hegelian unhappy consciousness, is essential for the one-pointed or clear drive to consistency with the ground-state, which constitutes enlightenment; and this entails both persistence or perseverance, i.e. not giving up, hanging-in-there; and trust: especially we have to trust the field of infinite correlation, the ground-state, above all in our own unlimited selves, that is in our own true nature and trust in our own self-knowledge of ourselves. We have to trust that things happen for a purpose, not just haphazardly, this is the teleology of the ground-state.[16] Then the orientation to enlightenment encourages, and is promoted by, a sense of 'lightness', of joy and delight. Moreover the idea of 'no regrets' is implied by unattachment to the past, and resonates with Nietzsche's 'eternal recurrence' and amorfati as a criterion. Also important is the principle of no unfinished business. This principle says that you should leave no unfinished business, that you should clear everything, that you should avoid nothing and face everything—for anything left undone will karmically bind you. This is of course an important principle which many adopt when they are facing or considering death; but it is a principle which one should seek to apply in everyday and in all aspects of one's life.

Four further principles are very important. First the principle of self-love or self-esteem—what is important to remember here is that your inner mentor, or real self loves you, loves you as much as (if not more than) anybody else. Her voice therefore will be soft, caring and tender, not harsh, insistent and dominating. If

[16] This is trust in self-rather than ego-teleology—the sense in which life is an individually designed obstacle course. Trust involves reciprocity, mutuality and completion (plenitude), Cf. fiduciariness and expressive veracity presupposed in truth talk.

you hear such a voice, this means that it is not the voice of your own real self—it is something that you have internalised from another or somewhere else; and within yourself it itself sets up a heteronomous order of determination and oppression. Leave well alone. Second, the standpoint of humility. Seek always to learn from others, and indeed everything in (all aspects of) life. Adopt the standpoint of humility—eschew anthropocentric, national, regional, occupational, personal, egocentric conceit. Thirdly the principle of innocence. Remember that inside every human being is a child—the 'inner child'—waiting to get out, to escape (for release). This inner child wants to play, and has played (at what cost?) in the world of enchantment. Finally an attitude of discipleship, of the divine as being ubiquitous, an invisible witness of everything we do, actually the presence of the akasha.

Reviewing the Way

What are we trying to do? To put the relative and the personality in touch with, and into alignment with, the absolute and the soul or unlimited self and make the former reflect and respond to the latter. In relating the finite tri-unity of mind–emotion–physical body to the infinitude of soul, self or spirit, it is important to see that the letting go of the ego and its replacement by the soul does not mean the letting go of the personality. Rather, the personality must reflect the unlimited self. The personality just is the unlimited self, engaged and embodied in spontaneously right transformative acts in the world. So what we are trying to do is to change the personality so that it reflects the unlimited self or soul.

If there are inner criteria for truth, and there is an essential human nature, should we not expect a convergence, or reflective equilibrium, on the laws/rules/principles/codes of the various religious (and secular ethical) traditions. There are many perspectives from which we could relate the foregoing analysis to the different spiritual traditions. These include the Yoga Sutra's of Patanjali and Buddha's eight-fold path. These will be considered in Volume 3 of this study.

There are certain characteristic responses to change—first surprise; then self-doubt and regression; then frustration; then experimentation until finally we have acceptance and understand-

ing that the change is working, be it in an unexpected, idiosyncratic, completely singularised way.

The most important features in the processes of change are recognition—shift focus by estrangement (cf. second-order reflexive retreat): look at yourself or your situation or response objectively, as from the outside; control, relax and control your breathing—breathe slowly, more generally slow your metabolic rate down to the level of the universe; then re-route and re-ground your activities by going for a walk or taking some other form of exercise (or rest) or engaging in some form of metaphoric or metonymic behaviour (e.g. listening to music or painting); then apply your common sense, assume responsibility, listen to what your inner mentor is telling you and use your discrimination or reasoning faculties, that is your intellect and intuitive discrimination; as well as accessing anything else that can help to re-illuminate and change your situation and self—for example revelation, introspection, contemplation, the interpretation or witnessing of dream and other unconscious or semi-conscious states; use them all to back up (or modify or refine) your intuition.

Act from a standpoint of balance, not one of emotional charge, then redo your narrative, change your story, enact your life in a different way and with total commitment, unconditionally to your new self, remembering that each moment is a present moment, each moment is a present (from the universe) to you and there is never any other moment than a present moment, and in each present moment you have a choice, that choice can be a new you. In that new moment you can undo or erase your attachment to the past, your possessions and your ego: you can surrender all to your unlimited self, then in the words of the Delphic oracle the universe and the Gods shall honour the identity of knowledge and being be yours.

> *Uphold us, cherish and have the power to make*
> *our noisy years seem moments in the being*
> *of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,*
> *to perish never:*
> *which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,*
> *nor Man nor Boy,*

nor all that is at enmity with joy can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither
Can in a moment travel thither
and see the children spoilt upon the shore,
and hear the mighty waters rolling evermore

—Wordsworth

Let me just by way of conclusion summarise what we should be trying to do. First we should *not* be trying to control things or other people; more basically, we should not even be employing instrumental reason except where we cannot help it (say for instance where we are engaged in strategic action within and against structures of systematic oppression, which employ instrumental reasoning—then if our intuition fails, obviously it is important to use instrumental reasoning to outwit the enemy or sustain one's own being and activity). Pay attention to feelings of 'disease': if in doubt slow down, and even slow your metabolic rate down to the level of the universe (you can try this as an exercise, starting with your breathing). You cannot do better than your ground-state could do in any given situation, so slow down to your ground-state, which is precisely that state of least excitation (and maximal efficacy) which is present in, and is a condition of, all your other states. You will then be at your maximally coherent, and be capable also, if you have been going in the wrong direction, of the easiest possible (because you are situated at the deepest possible) change, because you are situated at the deepest possible level, your point of maximum leverage. When you are in your ground-state, you will be your dharma, you will start to re-experience your lightness of touch, your sense of effortless fluency and your enjoyment. You will be eliminating the 'fuss' or 'interference' which was previously affecting your being and life activity. In your dharma, you will not be inclined to feel yourself superior or inferior to anyone else—you will understand and respect because you will be loving and enjoying your own concrete singularity and difference, your own uniqueness as a human

being. In your dharma you will act just as in your dharma, your action will elicit the maximally coherent response from the rest of the universe, in your dharma you will be maximally yielding and attuned to the rest of the universe—your best defence will be your defencelessness, your greatest resource or richness the 'poverty of plenitude' which is your inner emptiness; in fact your inner emptiness is the surface symptom of the fact that you are inwardly maximally fulfilled (for the moment, at any rate, in what is a potentially never-ending process of expansion); there is nothing that you have—you have nothing, but you are everything, and because you are everything your every action will be fulfilled, because you are inwardly abundant and flowing, and nothing is stuck, there is no way in which the energy of the universe cannot flow through you, you do not add or subtract to this energy because you are that energy, and that energy is the flow which is abundance.[17] Just because you give everything and want nothing, there is nothing that you will be unable to achieve. Because you will not call your achievement your own, without ceasing to honour and respect your own identity (and the singularised set of powers it encapsulates), everything will flow through you.

Section 5: Transformative Agency, Spontaneous Right-action and the Critique of Organisation Man

In this chapter we are in the domain of 4D or transformative praxis and reflexivity. There are five key theorems about action. First, the irreducibility of intentionality, the fact that intentionality is what differentiates human action from non-human (or human) behaviour. Second, the irreducibility of agency, what I have called the axiological imperative, the fact that we do not have a choice not to act. Third, its four-planar character, the fact that it has to be understood in terms of the four planes of social being which I have already delineated in this book. Fourth, the spontaneity of action, the fact that at some point we must just act. This, *ceteris paribus*, entails the priority of self-change, but the fifth theorem,

[17] Cf. circulation, currency, etc. all signify flow.

really a corollary of the third, on which all action is an event involving all four planes of social being, entails that any action at the level of the stratification of the personality is equally an action at the level of our transactions with others, our material exchanges with nature and in relationship to the reproduction or transformation of the social structure which we carry and bear. So self-change automatically implies social change.

I now want to bunch the ten characteristic features of spontaneous right-action which I discussed in Section 1 into seven and relate them to the twelve laws of spiritual fulfilment, or spiritual conditions for fulfilment which I elaborated in Chapter 4.

Seven Properties of Spontaneous Right-action

1. Spontaneous right-action is maximally coherent action. Generally the more grounded in one's essential alethic ingredient self one is, at least in the moment or for the duration of the activity concerned, the more complete, coherent and compassionate that action will be.

   Spontaneous right-action is maximally coherent action because it is action from the ground-state, the supramental level of the cosmic envelope, accessed through the gap or space (that is the absence) between thought. It follows from Law 1, that is the law of the unlimited self.
2. Spontaneous right-action is action, and spontaneous right living and flourishing is living and flourishing in the moment, that is in present-moment awareness, not attached, fixated or bound to the past and not obsessed, trained or concerned with the future, such as an attachment to the results or consequences of the action, which is undertaken just and only because it is right and not because it is designed to be successful.

   Spontaneous right-action is action-in-the-moment, focused (awareness or) attention on the object in which the intentional change, constituting the act performed, is to occur. This entails, as we have just noticed, present-moment awareness. It follows from the law of intention without desire (or attachment)—that is Law 8; and also from the law of detachment—Law 9. For we are no longer attached

to the outcome or the future; any more than we are attached to the past, which we are no longer inhabiting, i.e. in which we are no longer living (that is to say we are free from the presence of the past—or karma—cf. Law 6.

3. Spontaneous right-action is acting from where we are, with the resources at our disposal, i.e. to hand, on our own particular axiological world line. This is the action of an unlimited self, in a finite personality, embodied (and localized/indexicalised) at a particular place, and in a finite/limited environment. It follows from the principle of acceptance, i.e. the avoidance of make-believe, in Law 7, the law of least effort, to the effect that we accept (and work with and on) everything as it is. This indeed, as a moment's reflection shows, is the only place from which we can act. It does not follow from this of course that it is the only place on which we can act; nor does it follow that our action at this place must take place by a continuous medium or train of events to the place on which it acts. There is action (and passion, i.e. reaction) at a distance. Specifically, this also means that the agent is required to clear and release the blocks on his or her own divine energy.
4. Spontaneous right-action is integrated action, involving the tri-unity of mind, emotion and (physical) body—under the inspiration of spirit. Typically, of course, we have already noted how emotion is the term squeezed out by mind–body dualism; and its association both with sexism (male chauvinism) and the characteristic structures of our contemporary alienated society, on the re-enchanted world view that is emerging here, we will find delight, love, and joy in all sorts of reaches of life and existence, which the dis-enchanted world of post-19th century capitalism has drained out of being.

   This idea of spontaneous right-action as integrated action follows from the principle of embodiment—that is, the law of coherence or completion (Law 4)—at all levels of our being.
5. Spontaneous right-action is empowered, and empowered is responsible action. That is action which is oriented to social

justice and equity, that is the abolition of all master–slave relations and all reified and hypostasised ways of being and thought, including most especially instrumentalist modes of thinking and all conditionality for example the conditionality that is manifested in the commodification of love, say at Christmas, birthdays and other ritual occasions for the quasi-contractual 'exchange of gifts'. More generally it is action oriented to the abolition of alienation at all four planes of being, the development of a eudaimonistic society and way of being, and the conatus to universal self-realisation.

Spontaneous right-action then as empowered, and so as responsible action, that is, action from the ground-state, must be oriented to the abolition of all ills, otherwise it would be heteronomous and could not therefore be from the ground-state (cf. Law 1 and Law 2). This follows most clearly from Law 5—the law of giving, with its emphasis on doing as ideally a giving to and from for the sake of unconditional love alone.

6. Spontaneous right-action is action which is oriented beyond dualism and indeed all duality and split; and towards the synthesis and transcendence of all opposites and oppositions manifesting most poignantly as the split within and between people and nature; therefore perhaps above all to the norm of peace. It is important to note that the unity is not the same as the identity of opposites—thus we preserve distinction; though we do incorporate, internally relationally, the co-presence of the opposite within the one, that is the presence of the other within—the yin in the yang, etc.

   Spontaneous right-action is then action beyond duality, dualism and split. For it is from the non-dual straight, that is the ground or space of infinite correlation; as such it is oriented to the abolition and transcendence of all dualism, split, heteronomy and alienation alike. This follows from the law of coherence—Law 4—for only what is consistent with the ground-state can manifest itself without heteronomy, i.e. reflexively.
7. Spontaneous right-action is and characteristically takes the

form of simplicity, purity, clarity and is concerned with clearing, releasing, shedding though at the same time embodying, elaborating, developing, building on all that is inconsistent with our essential alethic selves. What is required here of course is that we lose only, but fully (completely) all that is other, heteronomous to and inconsistent with what we already and essentially are; and that we carry forth this exercise from ourselves, at the place of our selves on all four planes of social being, initiating a world of abundance, respect for other beings and nature generally. Spontaneous right-action, then, is action oriented to simplicity, shedding, self-realisation and universal self-realisation—this follows from Law 4, the law of coherence, again, which I also have referred to as the law of simplicity, clarity and purity, properly understood so as to include the virtues of full embodiment, realisation, manifestation and evolutionary growth, development and articulation.

The Critique of Organisation Man

At this point we should note some elements of a critique of the organisations and institutions in which we live, a critique which will be systematically resumed in Volume 3 of this study.

1. These institutions almost invariably stunt or stymie creativity, love, spontaneous activity, etc.
2. Almost inevitably such institutional structures are sustained by structures of instrumental reasoning, in which people are motivated by an egoistic conception of their own self-interest. People will not be in their dharma, that is to say they will not be doing jobs or engaging in activities which express their intrinsic nature as human beings.
3. However, such action will actually depend upon tacit, non-dual (basic), creative, loving, spontaneous agency—in fact agency which flows from and depends upon the ground-state qualities of the agents. Thus the 'invisible hand' of the market always depends upon the invisible (or more or less invisible) handshake of the transactors, or trust between them. So we have the peculiar situation in which organisa-

tions are set up which stunt and suppress the creativity and solidarity on the agents employed within them; yet these very structures of suppression and stunting, this wrongful use of human resources in fact depends and is in fact sustained by the good nature, that is the love and creativity, of the very agents, the expansion of whose ground-state properties those institutions deny.

4. In addition, the various forms that modernity takes, including the globalisation and Disneyfication (McDonaldisation) of social life, typically expresses the remorseless logic of analytical abstract universality (homogenisation, formalism [abstraction from quality and content, uniformity]) and so excludes and necessitates the occlusion (or screening), in the instrumental reasoning employed, of:

   qualitative considerations,
   external economies,
   invisible ingredients,
   internal relations, as well as
   more general subtle and heterocosmically amplified modes of connection and effect.

Chapter Six

The Nous of Perception and the Re-enchantment of the Tree of Life

What we observe is not nature in itself, but nature subjected to our mode of questioning.

—Heisenberg

Section 1: MetaReality as a Double Extension of Ontology and its Implications for Human Subjectivity

As has been noted there are two main respects in which the ontology of the philosophy of metaReality radically surpasses that of critical realism in its most developed, transcendental dialectical critical realist phase. That ontology is extended as follows:

1. It isolates the enchanted nature of reality, the way in which reality has to be n-dimensionally generalised to take account of the meaningful, evaluative nature of reality and correlated with sui generis emergent emotional, mental and supramental planes of being, incorporating direct mind-to-mind (feeling-to-feeling, etc.) causality, action and modes of connection. This is the 6R realm of re-enchantment.
2. To take account of the primacy of non-duality as underpinning all the above realms, in three ways: as ground or basis,

as mode of constitution or reproduction (and transformation), and as fine structure or interior of any moment of social existence. This is the 7Z/A zone or awakening of non-duality.

So that MELDA becomes MELDARZ/A or better just MELDARA.

It may seem that, because I have argued for the enchanted nature of reality through a consideration of the way in which the non-dual or transcendental character of reality immediately constitutes its enchanted character, via the collapse of the semiotic triangle which follows from the breakdown of subject–object duality, that the non-dual basis should come first, in the sense that it is, as it were, a step on the way to re-enchantment. But that would be wrong, because the world of enchantment (which is still a relative reality) takes on an autonomous life of its own and is real independently of any demonstration of (the possibility of) its existence, as done here through isolating the non-dual zone of reality.

At the seventh level we are for the first time dealing with a realm of reality which is absolute, the sixth preceding levels all being relative. The realm of non-duality underpins all the other realms via the three modalities already discussed; and it operates through the three primary mechanisms: the first being transcendental, and in particular transcendental identification; the second being through reciprocity; and the third operating through co-presence.

In extending our ontology in this way we must of course show how human beings can access these levels and aspects of reality which the ontological extension has pinpointed. And so we are bound to consider or reconsider in particular the faculty of perception, the way in which we sense, and through sensing, interpret the world. What we shall see is that we need to extend our concept of perception in three ways:

1. We need to extend the range of the concept, so as to take in not just increasingly sensitised perceiving and reading of the world, that is with, so to speak, our existing perceptual apparatus or sensibility.

2. We need to extend it also to the possibility of sense organs and modes of sensing of which we are not currently aware (or which have not been ratified by science).
3. And above all, we need to consider the dynamic functions of perception. Traditionally the faculty of perception was regarded as passive as distinct from the dynamic faculties of action, such as the use of the limbs in walking or writing, etc. But in this domain that distinction breaks down—for by creative visualisation we can actually affect the object of perception (or the envisioned) immediately and directly.

Thus attending, observing, without judgement, will have a healing and warming affect on another human being and objects generally. In this kind of way we immediately affect the object of perception without any physical mediation. This parallels exactly of course the way in which mind reads another mind, the way in which you immediately, without any physical mediation, understand what I am saying, or if you do not understand, you are at least hearing or reading my words.

What is involved here then are three terms: perception, action and being. Of course we must see being as both subjective and as objective. Perception is of course in the world, and so will immediately alter the world, i.e. the state of being that would otherwise have prevailed, *irrespective of any effect* it has either on the observer or the observed (that is either subsequently on the subjectivity of the observer or on the objective field of her observation). But of course normally *perceiving* the world *in a different way* will change *the way we are*, our sensibility and *the way we act in the world*. Similarly changing our mode of being will change our agency and perception; and changing our mode of acting in the world will change the way we are and the way we perceive it. Thus we have a **trialectic** of being, agency and perception, and here we are concerned with the new ways of being, **new ways of seeing** and **new ways of acting** through an understanding of being as enchanted, that is as immediately meaningful, valuable, transcendental, etc.; and as constituted by levels of mind, emotion and supramental or transcendental consciousness as well as physical reality, so as to generate a concept of

n-dimensionally generalised four-planar social being. If you like, each mode of four-planar social being can be understood as having at the very least three dimensions, namely the dimensions afforded by its evaluative or feeling aspect, its meaningful or mental moment and its transcendental, or spiritual dimension; with direct or indirect causality and being or beings occurring at all these planes. It is absolutely essential to grasp this. We do not hear someone speak, then interpret their meaning—we hear their meaning and then we may record their sounds for some other use.

So perception will immediately change the subject and, as changing the subject, it alters the state of being in the world; but through the sort of mechanism that we are isolating here a perception, or a change in the subjectivity of the perceiver, or a change in the way of perceiving, a change of perspective, immediately affects objectivity or the nature of the object concerned. And unless this was so, no communication of any sort would occur.

What we are looking at here is something that of course is very familiar at the level of quantum physics in terms of the idea of the **complementarity** of the observer and the observed. In physics this has normally been misunderstood, because there is quite a natural mechanism whereby it can be explained how, at the material level, the observation of the perceiver actually changes the material context in terms of what he is observing, so we do not have to take into account any emergent efficacy of perception or mind. However, the complementarity that we are discussing here is of a different kind so that we have to take into account the direct causal efficacy of emergent properties of human beings on material things (i.e. direct causality of mind, etc.) and other objects constituted at that or some other emergent level (direct causality of mind, in a mind-to-mind way).

Perceiving then has to be understood as a **way of acting**. And as we come to appreciate the enchanted and non-dual (or transcendental) levels in our being, our being changes too. And as our being changes, a change which could be motivated just by, as we shall see later, a single act of perception, so our way of acting in the world will change. And we have already seen that ways of seeing are immediately also ways of acting. Ways of acting, of course, will feed back onto ways of being, and extending

one's awareness or mode of being in the world will enable one to develop clearer and stronger modes of perceiving, ways of seeing. So new ways of being, new ways of seeing and new ways of acting are all dialectically intertwined and causally intra-related. At the same time as extending our concept of perception in a dynamic, so to speak, proactive we need to retract our concept of action in a passive, more reactive way. For actually in spontaneous right-action, action is something we just do. And we do it in response to the total holistic cues of our environment, so that it is a kind of doing in and through us rather than (or in addition to) a doing by us.

So just as we have a concept of spontaneous right-action, we need a concept of **spontaneous right perception** and we can develop and blend it further through to a concept of **spontaneous right cognition**. When you are in your dharma, which is your ground-state, then you will naturally tend to be acting and perceiving and cognising in a spontaneously right way. So spontaneous right-action and spontaneous right perception are **grounded in spontaneous right being**. This is being in your ground-state, capable of exercising your intrinsic and unique powers at all four levels of social being. Of course constraints and heteronomies may exist at any of these levels, and in particular in the other beings with whom you have to interact, in the social structure (say as a result of oppressive or master–slave relationships or gross irrationalities) or in social space generally, especially at the level of the natural environment, including of course the affect that socialised humanity has had on it. So that even when we are at our ground-state, and so in our dharma, we are not able to express this fully.

Nor can a person necessarily even be said to be in their dharma unless they are in the right place in terms of all the coordinates of four-planar social being. So it may be a person's dharma to be a brilliant musician but if they have no access to musical instruments then they can never be in that aspect of their dharma. So once again we see the importance of understanding that self-realisation must be universal, if it is to be fulfilled or complete for any one human being; and at the same time the importance of registering the simultaneity of action, the sense in

which action at any one level of social being, always coming from the agent him or herself, entails action at all four levels of social being; and the way in which these four levels all intra-act, in such a way that unless we clear 'matter' and social space at all these levels, we cannot be realised or free. When we understand reality as not just constituted by four-planar social being, but as constituted by n-dimensionally generalised four-planar social being, that is all these planes understood as incorporating also an emotional, mental and in principle intervening and further levels, ultimately grounded by the cosmic envelope, then we see the full scale of the task of self-realisation or freedom for any and therefore all human beings.

Section 2: On the Ontology of the Enchanted World and the Spiritual Exposition of Being

The development of critical realism is a process, as we have seen, of self-transcendence, in which each stage remedies an incompleteness or absence in the preceding stage. In *Reflections on Meta-Reality* (p. 182) I have outlined the 1M-4D/5A or MELDA structure of the most advanced stage of critical realism, which the 6R realm of re-enchantment and the 7Z/A zone or awakening of non-duality recast and develop; and I have also outlined a useful mnemonic for 1M–5A.

So what does the M in 1M stand for? It means that there is **more** to being than current knowledge of being (and indeed more to our knowledge of being than can be captured by the rigid, reified structures of analytical thought). This more to being includes all the **invisible ingredients** that play such an important part in our understanding of everyday life. Thus we all know what it feels like to move into a familiar room where something is missing (the space feels somehow 'wrong'). We all know what it feels like to experience the invisible ingredient of 'home cooking', the love and familiarity that is, in a very real way, a part of the meal that you are eating. We all know what it is like to have the invisible ingredient of the sun on one's back as one cycles to work. More also means that there is **more** to the **messy** confusion of the surface and chaotic structure of the phenomenal world than

meets the eye. This more is of course the mechanisms which generate it. More is the mechanisms and structures and fields and invisible (or visible, under special circumstances) powers and fields which generate them. Digging deeper down to more and more essential structures of reality, one touches at any one level, on the alethic truth of the previous level; and so we have the typical 5A inflection here of the 1M domain of ontology, in the concept of alethic truth itself, that is the idea of truth as real.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on the idea of **invisible ingredients** in social and practical life—for example the way in which our experience of enjoyment of food depends on or is affected by the emotional state of the person preparing (cooking/serving, etc.) it; and the environment in which the food is produced and prepared. Consider the love that makes the difference in the food the person consumes; the spacing of furniture that affects the activity in work; even the way in which some plants grow well together. Closely connected are subtle interconnections; internal relations that are involved in the systematic holistic causality which is at work in the enchanted world; heterocosmic affinities that are involved between different levels, regions or aspects of being. Thus the same phenomenon or cause may have multiple different manifestations at several different levels of vibration and in the same way meanings may condense on a single object so as to give systematic polysemy. What is involved in the enchanted world is nothing less than an enormously expanded general semiology of the sort that Saussure could scarcely have dreamt of. The basic structure remains the same, at least when given an adequate interpretation.[1] For the enchanted world is the world of signs, significance, meanings and values. And in this world we may act at one level and produce an effect at another, as in the case of metonymic and metaphoric action discussed in Chapter 4.

But the idea of an invisible ingredient, pinpointing the huge domain of the unseen (unheard, unnoticed, undetected, etc.) into which most of the ontology of the energetic and enchanted world

[1] Cf. *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom,* p. 223. And *Plato Etc.*, p. 52.

falls, is really a very simple one, without which any intentional praxis would be unintelligible. Because we cannot *see* an intention, an emotion, a thought, or any other ingredient in the genesis of an action, all we can see is their effect in the material world, in terms of producing movements of sounds, marks, more generally bodies in their environments or *umwelten*. Consciousness itself is an invisible ingredient which is absolutely indispensable for any human intentionality, and without which all social and human beings would be unintelligible. So enchanted beings, things, signs, etc. are just one among many different variations on a simple and ubiquitous causal efficacy, in which we identify and give life, value and meaning to the things in the world around us. We can readily generalise this paradigm, stemming from the creative power of thought, to the whole realm of hidden causal efficacies, manifesting themselves as multiple and different levels of vibration, operating in totalities characterised by holistic causality and, as a significant (meaningful), subject to the principles of semiotics and hermeneutics.

The concept of space, and in particular four-planar social space, must also be n-dimensionally generalised to make room for all these levels of being and their characteristic mode of efficacy both within, inside, and outside themselves and between themselves and each other in an inward (internal) or outward (external), open or veiled form which may or may not be manifest at the level of physical being, or apprehended by our normal physical sense organs. Nor is the concept of space in this world a simple or easy one. We may be concerned with energy fields, like magnetic fields. The basic mode of their analysis would be in terms of the trinity of: centre-periphery-space. Thus we may have an energy centre, knot or nexus, each of which will be specific to and charged by a specific interest, norm or value. These centres will be at physical, emotional, mental and further levels and may in principle be of many different kinds. Around the space of a human being, considered in this multidimensional way and as a whole, we have such concepts as psychic, social or energetic field or space (typically popularised in concepts such as that of the aura). An energy centre, which may be considered as a form of electro-magnetic pulsation, may be manifest as a disposition in

behaviour. Thus in the radiating circles of love we have the self-expanding nature of 'being-in-love-ness'.

We are concerned then always in this n-dimensional world with multiple vibrations and efficacies, with varying degrees of embodiment and of consciousness, as well as vitality, all of which may be enfolded, implicit or veiled, or alternatively as explicit, manifest, evolved. Between all these levels and beings there will of course be contradictions, discords as well as harmonies and resonances. This we understand as a characteristic theme of 2E; just as they will be ordinated in a stratified way (the emphasis of 1M); in internal and external inter-relationality and holistic causality (the theme of 3L); and more or less manifest in human consciousness and activity and more or less self-consciously or reflexively intuited or sensed (4D).

Both the contents and the forms of the enchanted world may be manifest and transmitted in an array of different forms, at different levels of vibration. Thus telepathy involves the space–time travel of the content of thought between two or more heterocosmically affine or affiliated individuals. Synchronicity operates in the same kind of way. Individuals, qualities and contents may all leap through space–time, in the way in which a creative idea, or any real novelty (including emergence), something which is involved in all genuinely transformative human acts, issues in the production of something new, there is a quantum leap or jump through space–time. The same impulse or cause may find multiple manifestations, different and non-continuous locations in space–time at or in different spaces (levels or dimensions of spatio-temporality and spatio-temporal being). I have already noticed that metonymic behaviour or activity—the clearing at one level to produce an effect at another level—may be a necessary part of emotional release or unblocking. But clearing at *all* levels (to eliminate residues) is normally necessary for the full liberation, empowerment, and realisation of the alethic truth of what we are.

Of course it is necessary to avoid any sort of quasi-individualistic reductionism here. Entities, forces (socially constructed and perpetuated), egregors may be, and indeed are all features of social life. How do we reconcile them with any standpoint that would argue for the priority and alethic truth of

unconditional love? Well, we may love the person but fight the force which inhabits, controls or manipulates him or her—a variant on the simple idea, part of common sense, that we may love a person but deplore their behaviour.

It should be obvious that our ontology will need to be expanded to incorporate:

(*a*) the energetic or etheric level, that is the sheath-like energetic aspect of physical embodiment, including the chakras, the meridians and the qualities of the sense and internal organs and the circumambient energetic field or aura;
(*b*) the emotional or astral realm—routinely accessed in sleep and after death;
(*c*) the mental and social–mental–ideational world; as well as
(*d*) the supramental world, that is the world defining what I have called the cosmic envelope.

This is not to mention other enchanted levels and aspects of being; and the sense in which the enchanted world is a partial manifestation of the deeper, non-dual world outside the parameters of linear (tensed) time, underpinning the land of duality and its demi-real the world of illusion (or maya), mists which may themselves contain and screen a multiplicity of diverse and indeed parallel universes, with their own ontologies, populated by beings and attributes with which we may or may not intersect/interact.

What does the E in 2E mean? It means **edgy**. Thus we begin to see life as a learning-from-mistakes process; as a question of challenges, obstacles, constraints and limitations, which we learn, in virtue of our very mistakes, to surmount and transcend. What is absolutely crucial here, in the 5A development of this conception, is the understanding that it is always subjective responses to a situation, not the situation itself, which provides the thrust of the learning process; which is our responsibility and the factor we need to work on. This is all of course subsumed under the standpoint of subject-referentiality.

Moving on now to 3L, what does the L in 3L stand for? It stands for love as the fundamental binding force in the universe and in social life. Love, we have already seen, is totalising; but it also healing and it is also expansive. Indeed going back to 2E for

a moment, we could say that in the struggle in and around our emotions, love is the leading edge in the expansion of our embodied personalities from domination by our egos to expression of our ground-states.

What does the D in 4D connote? It connotes, at least in this popular form of the mnemonic, **do**!: that is the irreducibility of praxis; and praxis-in-the (present) moment. Do includes choose; and it means taking responsibility for one's choices, and hence one's life. D also stands for dharma and for defencelessness. D also stands for don't delay—act now in the moment; and at the same time D also stands for the dance of life which is the superficial image of eternal repose.

The A in 5A stands for **aarh**! in the moment of transcending, of creative inspiration or eureka; of bliss, joy, release and relief.

The R in 6R stands for **resonance**, ripple or ray (the result of esoteric or exoteric reciprocity). Thus R as re-enchantment reinforces 1M more, 3L love; it also indicates 'really!?', as in a surprise, the edginess implicit in dare do, consummated in the 'aarh' of transcendence, **raised** and stabilised in awakening. So that the A in ZA is a resonating response or echo, a reaffirmation or reprise of the 5A of 'aarh', the aha!

Section 3: The Basic Claims of Re-enchantment

Modernity and its philosophical discourses, and the ideologies and social practices which underlie it, replaced the semi-enchanted world of the classical philosophical discourses of religion. A concatenated, sequence of breaks, the reaffirmation, the rise of Galilean and Newtonian science, the genesis of capitalism, the growth of the metropolitan cities at the expense of the countryside and colonies, the rise of new forms of political association, the development of new theories of perspective, and above all the Cartesian revolution in philosophy generated a new discourse: the philosophical discourse of modernity.

Each phase of this discourse is associated with a particular revolutionary upsurge or transformation. Thus the epistemological breaks at the beginning of the 17th century ushered in the

classical phase, which served to rationalise the English and French revolutions of 1640–60 and 1789 respectively. The false abstract universality of this discourse, as found say in Hume or Kant, led to the phase of high modernism, associated with the revolutions of 1848 and 1917, the discourses of the masters of the 'hermeneutics of suspicion', namely Nietzsche, Freud and Marx. The transformations associated with 1945–47 led to the theory and practice of modernisation. The revolutionary changes associated with 1968 and the early 70s gave rise to a fourth phase, which included postmodernism and the rise of the new social movements. The fifth phase of this discourse was reached with the collapse of the actually existing socialist bloc around 1989 and the seeming triumph of a single world system, that of a hegemonic globalising capitalism without an apparent alternative.

And so we have today a world of multiple alienation at all the planes of social being, in which emergent humanity threatens to destroy its own material conditions of existence at the same time as it destroys itself. But within this emergent humanity is a level of human being which sustains everything else. And this realm, newly re-enchanted and with its non-dual basis clearly revealed, opens up the possibility of a new way of human being. The understanding of reality as re-enchanted and as essentially non-dual, that is **understanding, and so beginning to live, metaReality** is already to roll back the realm of duality and disenchantment and to throw open the possibility of new ways in which humanity can become free, without destroying itself or its material conditions of existence, including its host planet, earth.

Here I will be looking at the effects of the philosophical discourse of modernity which was initiated by the Cartesian and associated breaks that occurred around the beginning of the 17th century. The upshot of this was a view of the world as being disenchanted, that is denuded of meaning, value, process and transcendentality or spirituality. What has been done already in *Reflections on Meta-Reality* and briefly resumed so far is to show how the collapse of certain crucial distinctions which underpinned the discourse of modernity allow us to see the world as re-enchanted again. In *Reflections* I showed how the collapse of the subject–object duality results, through the mediation of the

collapse of the semiotic triangle, once more in the view of the world as being meaningful; how the collapse of the fact–value distinction results once more in a view of the world as intrinsically valuable, that is as being intrinsically constituted by values, reality therefore as being right or wrong, etc.; how the collapse of the subject–predicate duality results in a view of the world, including life and consciousness, as developing, as in process, as evolving, as having one might say potentially a teleology; and how finally the collapse of the duality between the sacred and the profane, that is the re-transcendentalisation of being, made possible by understanding the role which non-duality plays in underpinning the world of duality, in the three modes of basis or ground, of constitution or reproduction (or transformation) and of deep interior.

There are two aspects to the basic claim of re-enchantment:

[A]

Ordinary things in the world are, contrary to the claims of dis-enchantment, **meaningful** (valuable; sacred [not just profane]; processual; in essence transcendental, i.e. non-dual and show reciprocity and contain implicit totality, i.e. enfolded co-presence of everything else);

[B]

There is **more** to the world than ordinary things, i.e. the things blown to codified common sense/conventional wisdom/ratified science.

The first aspect [A] stems from the critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity, which was most graphically symbolised in philosophy by the Cartesian revolution. This generated a problem-field or problematic in terms of which an individual ego was set against and opposed to a reified object world; and in the same move set against or opposed to all other egos. The homuncular ego related to the object world and other egos in the same way by means of instrumental rationality, ends–means rationality, conditional or contractual exchanges. His relationships with his fellow beings marked the origins of **gesellschaft** as distinct from **gemeinschaft**, i.e. mechanical rather than organic sociality. The form of reasoning implied was characterised by Weber in terms of the structures of rationalisation and the

famous thesis of an iron cage. The main effect of this problematic was that the ego was de-totalised from the world in which he must act (and which includes his fellow human beings). Indeed ultimately he is de-totalised from every contingent aspect of himself, until he disappears in the vanishing self of classical Humean empiricism and contemporary poststructuralism and postmodernism alike. To this we will return but it is important already to note the immediate effect that it takes the observer out of the field of his observation, making self-awareness in your own field of awareness, or witnessing generally—so vital in the dialectics of inaction—straight away impossible. And with this goes the possibility of reflexivity and responsibility, since there is no monitoring or checking device, on the one hand; and, on the other, since everything external to the observer or the ego is defined by deterministic, abstractly universal, Humean causal laws, i.e. empirical regularities, from which the observing ego is uniquely exempt.

Turning now to the second aspect, we have already seen that one of the characteristic features of empiricist ontology was to tie the existing world to what was currently known, the 'ontic fallacy' which co-existed symbiotically with the epistemic fallacy, implicit in the denial of ontology. Once you situate ontology as an independent subject then it is always possible that not only will some claims to knowledge be incorrect, but there will be far more to being than current knowledge ever imagines. So we begin to redefine key concepts—perception; seeing; intuiting; knowing; reading; above all consciousness, including transcendental consciousness and transcendence generally—in terms of an expanded conception of being and in terms of a redefined conception of agency, in which among other things the agent is:

1. no longer detotalised or extruded from the subject matter from which he acts;
2. seen as possessing irreducible *emergent* intentional, and so mental and emotional, *powers*;
   (a) capable of affecting the physical contours of four-planar social being; and
   (b) capable of
      (i) *directly*, as well as

(ii) *indirectly*, affecting mental, emotional and other emergent levels of four-planar social being in virtue of the capacities we have and must have for mind to read (or be at one with) another mind directly, immediately, without any physical mediation. Such capacities are necessary for us to understand, communicate, learn or even act at all,[2] so that the senses, powers and faculties of human beings cannot therefore be restricted to the purely physical level, and social being must be n-dimensionally generalised accordingly.

In fact this restriction to the physical level is what the Vedic tradition has called 'the blind tenacity' of the belief in the physical as exhaustive of being in which we tend to get trapped. And according to that tradition (or aspects of it) just as, in the terminology I have been using, for realisation or enlightenment, we need to shed our ego, clear our karma and clear our mental, emotional and physical/energetic being; so we need also to shed *this* illusion,[3] involving the view that all that exists is what can be immediately perceived and identified by the physical senses, as in the empiricist 'esse est precipi'. On the other hand, once we allow the causal efficacy of irreducible, sui generis emergent properties at the supramental, mental and emotional levels, this immediately opens up the possibility of pre- and post-incarnation, i.e. non-physical (as we understand it) existence and causality. And, at the same time, sets the scene not only for the theme of reincarnation, but also the other two, of the classical Vedic trinity, of karma and moksha, with the first two necessitating the postulation of what I have been calling the psychic being, as the continuant through and between lives, and the third as equivalent to what I have been calling self- (and at the further stage, god-) realisation.

So if mind can read mind or read feeling or read the physical world, and if our emotions or feelings can be at one with those

[2] For the perception we have of the world must be, at some level, unmediated, direct, just as is our communication with our fellow beings.

[3] It is this illusion in particular that we are critiquing here in Chapter 6 in developing the properties of the enchanted 6R realm of ontology.

objects of extended sensibility too, then we need a vastly expanded ontology which will allow for such things as sui generis mental entities, often charged with emotions—which is just what sociologists would refer to as ideologies, but other traditions might want to talk of forces or habitual ways of believing, or egregors, or whatever. These blocks and constraints on human emancipation might lead one to say that unconditional love for human beings went side by side with, indeed entailed, a determination to fight the force or system which inhabited or imprisoned them (e.g. Gestapo guards in the holocaust, but in more subtle ways the functionaries of all oppressive or master–slave relationships).[4] So we have the idea of emergent levels, properties, connections, products and forces ultimately all grounded at the supramental level of existence. And in particular:

(*a*) corresponding to the level of feeling, we have various forms of reciprocity or mutual attraction and repulsion; and
(*b*) corresponding to the level of thought, we have various meaningful relationships, which can be understood by generalising our semiotics and hermeneutics.

What would the topology of this world be like and what would its basic mechanisms be? The first thing to realise is that there is more to being than can be possibly physically modelled. But one could imagine that the (so to speak) 'atoms' or 'molecules' of these subtler planes of being, constituted by our emotional and mental makeup and their products, consisted in atoms or analogues which were less dense, more rarefied, so that, as one shot through the barriers of physical space and moved into a realm shorn of spatio-temporal constraints, one slipped through the

[4] Of course there can be no one-to-one relationship between those forces and the individual human beings, so that the simple binary opposition of master–slave relationships must be read at the level of the real, non-actual and cannot be immediately identified with any particular pair of human beings; so that the structure of master–slave or oppressive relationships can no longer be thought in binary, hierarchical or dualistic terms (which just reflect a perhaps radical displacement of the thought world of duality), but has to be understood in terms of a totality whose minimum unit would be the human race, and ultimately all beings, whether sentient or conscious or not.

holes in physical space into a less bounded realm. So, topologically, you go **inside** or **between** the spaces constituted by physical atoms—that is you move **inwards** and then **upwards** and onto a space which circumnavigates, extending **outwards** and **beyond** the physical world, unconstrained in the same way by physical laws, though doubtless still by sui generis laws of its own.

On such a topology, a thing or object will naturally be attracted to what it is like or wants itself to be, by relations of attunement and affinity, and mutuality or reciprocity. Thus in general, just as if you smile at someone else, *ceteris paribus* you will evoke a smiling response from them, as one smile attracts another, so an emotional or mental thought form or feeling will have a certain vibration which will naturally gravitate to something of its own kind. Just as people who are Marxist tend to get together in the physical or material world, so then Marxist thought will get together on the mental plane to constitute a Marxist ideology or egregor. And such an egregor will grow and expand and mutually attract its own kind. So we have a principle of attraction. At the same time such an egregor will repel and be hostile to say fascist or pro-capitalist thoughts and feelings. Of course these terms are all metaphors because our base understanding of them is derived from the physical world in which we see how an iron filing moves towards a magnetic pole. But this is true of all science which extends ontology. We are always forced to see or picture what we cannot see or do not know in terms of models which are drawn from the realm of what we can see or do know. Thus the 19th century physicists thought of atoms as billiard balls (preferably, as Rutherford was later to confess, 'red or black'), although we know now that these erstwhile billiard balls are galaxies constituted for the most part by empty space, whose stars are revolving at a very rapid rate.

Reciprocity

So let us move immediately to the key concept of reciprocity. If I engage in an act, then this will immediately set up a vibration which will, other things being equal, tend to evoke a reciprocal response not just in the being to whom the act is directed, but in all similar beings, though whether it affects that object will de-

pend on the totality of other forces which are impinging on it at that time. Now as the totality is enfolded within any one object, then if that object is not particularly like me or the being to whom I direct my act, then it will only have an implicit or enfolded reciprocal response—its response cannot be explicitly articulated or at best it will take the form of a very weak echo. How in showing love for a plant does the plant love you back? Well, we all know that it does and the effect can immediately be seen. But we do not know the precise mechanisms by means of which plants feel. That they do, however, is obvious. Moreover some plants cohabit well with others—they have definite tastes. As the consciousness of a being develops then it can increasingly respond, i.e. resonate in the implicit but awakening totality of its being, to stimuli which come from, or are directed to, beings which are not particularly like it. Thus most people today can feel for the plight of endangered species. But at the same time they will probably not feel for them in such an immediate way as for a partner or a close friend.

Relationships of reciprocity work through an extension of transcendental identification, in virtue of generalised co-presence. Thus in a shared smile we become one with each other just as you do in listening to my words. Actually in listening, non-dually, to my words the listening is a reciprocal response to my speaking and I hear your listening in turn. The level of co-presence involved may not in this case be very deep if it happens that we are both English speakers and we are working together or we are friends or whatever. But, by extension, just as if I smile at a rose, the rose in me can feel the reciprocating response in transcendental identification, even if it is only the enfolded or implicit response in the rose that I am one with in my smile. What this means is that transcendental identity in consciousness cannot be modelled on sentences or thoughts alone. It must extend to activities, attitudes, feelings, the unsaid but still intended. And this transcendental identification may also be regarded as not just of consciousness, but of the properties and qualities which are carried by, as the content of, the conscious activity, or which can be read as having consciousness also enfolded within them—in the way in which any exchange in nature may and indeed must be

understood as taking the form of an equilibrating equation. For at this level, how could one thing affect another unless at some point, at some level, in some manner, of being they met or were one. Nor should we think that we are fully conscious of everything that we do or happens to us. It is perhaps only after an event that we experience our irritation, enjoyment or whatever; but the irritation or enjoyment, the frustration or reward was there all the same at the time, even though we were not aware of it. So just as there is more to being than knowledge, there is more to your being than you can immediately experience, feel or know.

The goal of reflexivity, as applied to an individual, might be the total awareness of everything that was happening to itself, but since that individual is in principle in systematic intra-connection with the totality of other beings, this suggests that the criterion of reflexivity could only be satisfied by total awareness of the whole cosmos, i.e. the cosmic envelope and its contents, that is, at the level of god-realisation—which thus appears as necessary to satisfy what I have called the 'supreme criterion' of philosophy.

Section 4: Redefining Perception and Action in a Re-enchanted World

Thus the first thing we need to consider is how perception, and the perspective which informs it, changes the world; that is, in what sense it is or partakes of the characteristic of action, which is to make a difference to the state of affairs that would otherwise have occurred. As already mentioned, the first thing to understand is that perception, and perspective generally, is part of the world. Perception immediately makes a difference to the world, because perception is *in* the world and so affects the world immediately; in the same way our perspective, and changing our perspective, will immediately alter the world. Now this is of immense importance because understanding that perspective and perception is in the world deconstructs the binary opposition between the perspective of the perceiver and the world he perceives. This binary opposition was (and is) essential to the theory of perspective and harmonises with the breaks in what Foucault

would have called *epistemes* which occurred at the time of the Renaissance and was associated with the rise of bourgeois individualism, capitalism, modern science and new forms of decision making which eventually gave rise to parliamentary democracy. Before looking at this rupture in its most general aspect, I want to consider it purely in relation to perception and perspective.

Perspective is in the world and part of the world, but it also alters and determines the way you see the world, especially the way you feel, think and talk about the world; and as such it will affect your action in the world. A new way of understanding your being in the world will affect your being; and how you are will alter how you act; which will alter how you see things in the world. So what we have here again is essentially a **trialectic** in which we have new ways of being, new ways of seeing and new ways of acting are all in dialectical affinity and reciprocity.

Let us go back for the moment to the defining problematic of modernity. Let us look at it from the most basic point of view, that of our physical embodiment. It is evidently the case that no two human beings can occupy the same location in space–time. This is a defining characteristic of the physical world. So we are all situated, located differently from each other. And the way we see the world is always going to be, physically, therefore slightly different. The great contribution of the discovery of perspective in the theory and practice of art was to redefine the world in terms of the subjectivity of the perceiver. Before the discovery of perspective there was no centre, no point from which the world was viewed.

Everything was changed with the discovery of perspective, the whole world was redefined around the centrality of the position and the gaze of the perceiver. The *perceiver* became the centre of the world. And just as in the theory of perspective, the perceiver became the centre of the picture (while standing outside it), so at the same time the individual subject, the homuncular egoistic self became the centre of philosophical, scientific, socio-economic and political and religious discourse (while standing free of its findings). Thus with the rise of the bourgeoisie, resulting from the surpluses yielded by agrarian capitalism and the exploitation of the first colonies, the bourgeois individual became

the centre of social discourse, the tacitly gendered ego was a man who owned, had property, a possessor, at the centre of a possessive individualism.

Let us take this all back to the theory of perspective. Because the world was defined in relation to the perspective of one perceiver, *this meant that different perceivers*, necessarily, *could not share the same perspective*. So they were split one against the other, just as the perspective of the perceiver was opposed to the world he perceived. And so we had the genesis of the underlying problem-field of modernity defined in the following way:

There is an ego or individual subject, a perceiver/owner/thinker opposed to other subjects and set against an object world. His relation with other egos and his relationship to the object world is defined in terms of means–ends or instrumental rationality. They are the objects of his perception, manipulation, calculation in contract, conditional exchange or whatever. Typically the object world is reified. But very soon this happens to other egos as well, who are treated in the same calculative, manipulative, way; and so we have the origins of the view of human society as consisting in, as Hobbes put it nicely, a war of all against all. Hobbes was very self-conscious about this, being, as he freely admitted, 'the first to flee', at the onset of the English civil war, motivated by the very fear that he isolated as the fundamental feature in society. For Hume it was desire, but the effect was pretty much the same. Because if we are all set against each other then obviously we must wish to possess or control instrumentally each other so that the old ideas of community, of loving and sharing and giving (either just giving or later giving and taking) go; and we have a society dominated by taking, and in which giving and taking mistakes giving for taking.

Now to focus more particularly on perception. Changing your perspective will of course immediately alter the world, as we have seen, but since your perspective determines the way you see the world, including the way you feel, think and talk about the world, it will also change your way of being in the world and your way of acting in the world. This is the trialectic to which I have already referred. This perceiving is also a reading of the world as a text and your readings will inform your action.

Now we know there is no one way of seeing the world, there are many ways corresponding to different social, cultural and personal formations. The way an Eskimo sees snows is different from the way we see snow; the way post-Renaissance science saw sunsets was different from the way Aristotelian medieval science saw them. Before Newton we saw objects simply falling to the ground; after Newton, with a bit of effort, we can see them being pulled to the earth by the force of gravity. Or we can take the well-known phenomenon of gestalt switches: we see this set of dots now as a duck, then as a rabbit (as in Wittgenstein's duck/rabbit). We know from our own experience that there are multiplicities of ways in which we see things, and just to bring home the truth of relativism, we also know that we can see the same scene in a different way according to our interests and expectations. Thus to take a famous example of Sartre's, when he goes to a cafe to meet Pierre, the thing that he *notices* is the absence of Pierre, nothing else—not the food, not even the presence of Simone de Beauvoir, just the absence of what he was expecting to see. Similarly Gibsonian ecological theory of perception shows that we see things such as a chair as affordances, for sitting on or whatever. We perceive the world in terms of our, particular, human interests. So in this sense subjectivist and perspectivalist theories of perception, like epistemic relativism generally of which they form an instance, are true.

But because we are agents, we also want to know the best way of seeing the world (for us), what is the right or true or most useful or most empowering, or perhaps (if we are into avant garde art) the most shocking or outrageous way of seeing the world. So we cannot just be content with the postmodernist and poststructuralist view of a variety of systems, structures, semiotic codes or hermeneutics, ways of interpreting, perceiving and reading in the world. For we must have criteria which allow us to judge the best way for us to read the world (out of a variety of different ways). So we need rational criteria of choice. Whatever objective you set yourself in life, you will want to know what is the best way of interpreting the world, in order to discover what is the best way of achieving your objective. Your objective will not just achieve itself, it will only be achieved in virtue of your

actions, which have to be informed by your perceptions and cognitions of the world.

So once you ask questions about the best way of achieving your objectives in life, then you are inevitably going to have to talk *about* the world, and that will take you into questions about how perception is constituted socially, and about the place of perception within that total reality of which you are an integral part. So we have judgemental rationality and the moment of realism. For once you have put yourself in the picture, you take yourself out of the perspective of the theory of perspective in three ways. First you can no longer posit a binary opposition, and complete separation, between the perceiver, or his perspective and the world. The perceiver is not necessarily set *against*, or *opposed* to, the world. Secondly, the perceiver *is* in the world, as *part* of what he perceives. There is a further refinement on this, necessitated by the theory of the pure apperception of awareness outlined in Chapter 1, on which if the perceiver is to perceive correctly he must necessarily perceive himself in the picture he perceives. So in these three ways we depart radically from the perspective of the theory of perspective.

We have now put ourselves back into the world, as constitutive parts of the world, no longer opposed to the world or other subjects, not necessarily related to the world or other subjects by external relations of attachment (desire) or aversion (fear), manipulation, reified thought, conditionality, etc. For you are now part of the organic whole or gestalt in which you perceive yourself and act. This takes us a long way not just from structuralism (poststructuralism and postmodernism), but from the fundamental oppositional binary structure, constitutive of reality, as understood in the philosophical discourses of modernity. It is just worth noticing that the very phenomenon of binarity is essentially a *left-brain* affair, so the privileging of an either/or, a yes/no, a polarity rather than a structure in a totality or holistic plurality, is still very much part of the world view of modernity, dominated by atomistic, actualistic and analytical thought and egoistic instrumentalist reasoning.

Once we have what could be called the holy trinity of critical realism, namely the consistency and mutual compatibility of

ontological realism, epistemological relativism and **judgemental rationality, then** we can see that as an agent in the world, wanting to change or transform the world, then necessarily we will want to ask explanatory or causal questions about how the world is presently constituted and what the prime levers of change are. This will take us also into a critique of our own unexamined pre-understandings of the world, a self-critical and self-explanatory process at the same time as it is critical and explanatory of the social world generally.

This is very different from the way in which the world was conceived by the discourses of modernity, something much more in common with the organic world views prior to the bourgeois/Cartesian revolution. We will go into that a bit later. But it is important to note that this is also very different from the typical academic approach to the world, as there to be classified, dissected and described with the academic extruded and de-totalised from his subject matter. This mirrors exactly the way in which once the theory of perspective was discovered, the perceiver was de-totalised from what he perceived and all other perceivers. But if you look at the subject matter from inside, as an agent dealing with that subject matter, then you are bound to ask questions about choice, rationality, how to change things and the nature of transformative tendencies in the world, because you are not just an external perceiver or manipulator or academic investigator of the world, but an agent in the world, part of the picture you are painting, in full cognisance of your agency in it.

It is just worth noting here how in the latest phase of the high academic discourse of modernity, through structuralism and poststructuralism, this modernist problematic was reinforced. It stemmed from Levi-Strauss' critique of the humanism and historicism of Sartre, forged in his intense (though abstract) engagement with the cold and concrete, i.e. ahistorical societies of 'primitive peoples'; however these societies were soon drawn into a process of change shortly after his investigations. In fact you can say that the first generation of western anthropologists who went into these ahistorical societies (or so they thought) immediately imposed historicity and contemporarenity on them—by going into and asking them questions, they opened up a hermeneutic,

starting a process which incorporated them into modernity and its globalising monologic.

I have been talking about perception and perspective. This notion of perspective on which I am focusing is not only involved in perception, but in all cognitive activities, such as classifying, describing, thinking, speaking discursively, etc. and therefore in all activities at all, because every activity is informed by ideas, consciousness, interpretative systems, categorial schema, ways of viewing the world. And the whole thrust of the theory of the philosophy of metaReality has been to bring to the fore the essential reflexivity of the process of perception and action and of awareness-in-action; the irreducible and primitive character of the notions of 'I see it', 'I get it', etc.; and the responsibility implicit in the standpoint of self-referentiality. Moreover perception, in the sense of 'seeing', becomes perhaps the most basic and immediate form of knowing and a form which ultimately underwrites all others, at least in a communicative context. You might say that intuition was even more basic, that may be correct. But you still have to communicate your intuition to others and they have to 'see it', albeit in the coincidence of in-tuitions or in-sights.

Section 5: New Ways of Being, New Ways of Seeing

In Chapters 1 to 5 of this book we examined progressively the nature of transcendence; the self, the mind, the emotions and then action, paradigmatically physical action. But we did not examine in any detail the nature of the nervous system and the sense organs and the other internal organs or the nature of the faculties of action. This kind of analysis could be applied in principle to all of these, but by focusing on perception, which is the immediate way in which we read the world, I am focusing on something which affects both subject and object and also immediately triggers an appropriate physical response.

As we have already seen, there is no incompatibility between ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgemental rationality. Putting these three together allows us to ask questions about what it is that immediately informs our pre-understandings, and whether our immediate intuitions, perceptions, readings of

the world, are in fact correct or most adequate. And here we need the idea of a critique of unexamined pre-understandings, intuitions. Why do we always see such a person as a beggar, or working class, or whatever, out of the myriad other ways in which we could immediately identify or read him. So actually suspending your understanding and just looking or listening without judging, interpreting or classifying becomes very important. For the longer you can stay in that moment of pure observation without judgement or classification, the more you will understand the deep structure of that person or being, what he or it actually is, with its warts, then you will find yourself loving it, until ultimately, if you stay with that experience long enough, you will just feel the pure joy or bliss that comes from any extended absorption in any aspect of being. This is what I call the pure power of apperception, of observation (without judgement or thought), whose therapeutic affects we have already noted in Chapters 1 and 4.

So we need to be very careful and suspicious about our pre-understandings, the way we normally classify the world, in a world constituted by master–slave relationships and hierarchies. These will almost always be superficial and partial, if not actually false. The importance of this point is accentuated when we turn to the second edge of ontology, the understanding of being as becoming—for what emerges in perception is almost always a gestalt, a whole, and so we need to be even more careful about the purity and clarity of our perceptual and analogous mechanisms, our sensibility and acting faculties generally. The norm of clarity, coherence and purity applies here as anywhere else. So if we always see someone as 'no good' or a 'down-and-out', or for that matter just as Japanese, then we need to be aware. Actually they are a totality and constituted by hierarchies and nexuses of master–slave type relationships, in which they can never be captured by a single classification and will often have to be understood in a multiple and apparently contradictory way.

Turning then to the nature of the experience of perceiving, that is looking, listening, etc. at 4D, that is the domain which understands being as incorporating transformative agency and reflexivity, we need to understand perception, sensing, etc. in terms of five theorems about human agency:

1. The irreducibility of intentionality, its meaningful character.
2. The irreducibility of agency, the fact that we cannot not act, perceive, etc.
3. The four-planar, and here n-dimensionally generalised four-planar character of social being.
4. The spontaneity of agency, entailing the priority of the first-person standpoint, the 'I see it' which is so essential to learning, communication, acting or even perceiving in the world—if you see something as dots then you are not, unless you are engaging with Morse code, actually seeing anything. If you see something on the blackboard as a string of numbers or letters you are not seeing the equations or proof that you are 'supposed' to see. And no-one else can see it for you. And perception, like action, is something only you can do. Having said that, we need to involve a fifth theorem of action, which is that any action, always of course by an agent, is not only an action of that agent—this is:
5. The **simultaneity** of action—that is action on all four planes of social being. Thus even though only you can act, whatever you do in your action is at once affecting and making a difference to material transactions with nature; social interactions with others; the social structure (which is reproduced or transformed in your agency); and the constitution or make-up of your stratified embodied personality. Thus in acting you always act on all the planes of social being. The primacy of the first-person standpoint only makes the obvious point that you can only act through yourself. You dupe yourself and others in a dangerous way if you do not take responsibility, if you suppose that someone else can act *for* you, rather than *with* you; or that your act can extend to them and undermine or circumvent their agency, so that you can liberate or save (or even teach) them without their agency.

There are three fundamental parameters in terms of which we need to understand perception. First we need to understand perception socially. Secondly we need to understand it semiotically-hermeneutically. And finally we need to understand it in terms of binary relations, including master–slave relations generally.

First understanding perception socially means that we have to understand it in terms of all four planes of social being, as just discussed.

Secondly, the fact that when you perceive the world, you always perceive it at some level as meaningful means that we can employ all the techniques of **semiotics** and **hermeneutics** not just to your perception, the way you read the world, but to the world which is read by you. Not just your perception or your words or your expression but that which you perceive bears meaning and is the signifier of a semiotic triangle. In its own right as we come to extend our faculties of perceiving, sensing things in the world, intuiting different levels of being, cognising, knowing, we can begin to see more *in* a thing; and see more *of* a thing—in this sense become more **clairvoyant**, which just means seeing more clearly. This will often be also seeing *through* other people's and your own previous or tendential present ways of viewing things—so this is a critical faculty. As you see more in a thing you are able to read more at any one level of that thing's being. As you see more of a thing you are able to read more of that thing's structure, its environment, its constitution, its past and its tendential future. Insofar as everything is enfolded or co-present in everything else, we have a simple explanation of how there can be so many different media in which you can read a thing's significance—thus there is no implausibility in your reading that you can read the significance of something in a stellar configuration or a deck of tarot cards or in the look of someone's eyes or in their favourite picture or in the structure of their internal organs or energy centres (if you could see them) *or* in a pebble you picked up on the beach. In other words the whole of being is configurationally splayed out in which you can in principle read the meaning or significance of the same thing in a myriad of different ways.

So the second fundamental parameter in terms of which we understand perceiving the world is as meaningful. Archetypally meaning is of words, sentences, etc., either spoken, phonemes, or written, graphemes. The basic analysis for the understanding of any meaning must be the semiotic triangle. This consists of the sign or signifier, the meaning or signified and the referent or object designated. Here we can note that a word like 'cow'

designates objects in the world, but the meaning of cow varies considerably according to context. In the west 'cow' is pretty close to 'bitch', whereas in India the meaning of the signifier cow is close to holy, mother, as well as dairy, etc.

Just considering gender, one might want to look at the variety of metaphorical descriptions of women in the west with different connotations—bitch, cow, chick, bird, hen or butch, as opposed to men where normally all you will get is a reference to the mother or the feminine or the non-male (e.g. son of a bitch, pansy, poof, etc.). Or we can consider the way in which women's sexual organs or things to do with sexuality are abused in language. The phenomenon of polysemy, the multiple complexes of condensed meanings, also raises the question of whether there can be such a thing as a literal as distinct from a metaphorical language. Perhaps Nietzsche's view that language is nothing more than a 'mobile army of metaphors' is not so far from the truth—e.g. 'your room is like a pigsty'. What this view suggests is that all the elements of language are always moving, that it is a poetic process in which nothing is fixed.

Once we have the paradigm of the *semiotic* triangle, then we can displace it. That is we can regard the referent of words, such as an act, a painting, a work of art, or even an ordinary artefact such as a table, or a natural phenomenon, such as dark clouds in the sky, as themselves meaningful. And taking these real referents in the world as signifiers themselves we can ask such questions as 'what is the meaning of those clouds?'; or 'what is the meaning of Tommy Smith's black power salute with Juan Carlos at the victory ceremony of 200 metres in the 1968 Olympics?' Did this mean that 'we blacks no longer acknowledge the symbols of the American nation, indeed we no longer represent that nation, but our own people'? And did the clenched fist display the way they intended to fight the establishment for their own identity as black people, opposed to the structures of the American state?

Obviously we can only understand something as meaningful, whether it is an act, an event or an object, in virtue of the *hermeneutic* moment. This is paradigmatically the direct reading of the world in a certain way. Even when we have to elaborately reconstitute or renegotiate the meaning of a phenomenon, such

as a work of art, this presupposes a level in which we immediately understand what we are talking about. This is crucial for social analysis and critique, because what determines these immediate pre-understandings of the world, what determines the fact that I see the man over there as an immigrant worker, not as a gentleman wearing a certain set of clothes, or as happy or sad, is determined precisely by an unexamined level of awareness in terms of which our perception of the world is, so to speak, pre-structured. Anyway we read the world is a certain way, as a text, and this is the truth of poststructuralism or postmodernism. The world is a text, in the sense that it is meaningful; in this way the idea of textuality in the linguistic turn was an important moment in the development of the discourse of modernity.

Turning now to the third aspect of the social nature of perception and more generally perspective, insofar as it presupposes choice and intentionality, it displays a characteristic binary structure: yes as opposed to no, male as opposed to female, capitalist as opposed to worker, immigrant as opposed to native, or creative as opposed to repetitive. It is not difficult to appreciate the logic behind this view that social phenomena, insofar as they are interpretative or meaningful, are characteristically structured in our sort of society in terms of these binary oppositions. The structuralists had already displayed and mapped the logic of these binary oppositions and hierarchies and their systems, which the poststructuralists, most famously Derrida, set out to deconstruct. The most characteristic features of these oppositions was that it appeared as if the terms of the binary structure or polarity were always characterised in terms of a relationship of superiority or privilege and inferiority or subordination (though it is not so obvious, the relationship is unique or one-way). Thus famously Derrida took the binary opposition between speech and writing, and inverted it to say that writing was actually primary and speech secondary or derivative. Or feminists would invert the binary opposition between men and women, or freedom fighters in the Third World that between coloniser and colonised, or more radically between violence and non-violence. Thus Fanon had displaced the opposition which had been sanctified by Gandhi, arguing for the necessary therapeutic affects of violence; a few generations on

Mandela re-inverted this in a Gandhian way. This actually follows the logic of the inversions practised by the leaders of the so-called 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. Thus Marx inverted the relationship between capitalists and workers, Freud that between the conscious and the unconscious, Nietzsche that between the literal and the metaphorical, etc.

What is the basis of this inversion that is the first moment of the deconstructionists' move? The basis is the claim that it is the subordinate term which sustains the privileged or prioritised one. Thus it is the workers who keep capitalism going, women who underpin male chauvinist society, etc.; or Derrida would say writing is actually the tacit condition of speech—e.g. if you forget a word, you look it up in the dictionary. Of course this raises problems for understanding society with oral cultures, which would be answered by saying that our understanding of the understanding of societies with oral cultures is always mediated by written materials. I have examined the problems with this line in relation to the critique of postmodernists' rejections of ontology, so I will not repeat it here.

This initial move can then be radicalised in one of two ways. The assumption is that the two poles of the binary opposition in some way constitute each other, that it makes no sense to talk about lightness except in terms of its polar opposite darkness; or left-handedness except in terms of right-handedness. The first line then is to shift out of the binary opposition, to try and, so to speak, occupy the space between or in the margins of such oppositions or to oscillate from one to another. The more politically radical stance has been to argue that it is precisely the job of the underprivileged, such as the workers or the women, to overthrow the structure of the polarity itself—thus it is the job of the workers to overthrow capitalism and liberate the whole of humanity; or the job of women or feminists to overthrow the chauvinist system in virtue of which men dominate women.

The trouble with this political position is that a close analysis of the terms of these binary oppositions shows that they cannot be read in a one-to-one way onto actually identifiable aspects of reality. Thus very few people in our society are not workers of some sort. Many women embody some male features and traits,

such as working in the commodified realm or possessing natural assertiveness verging on aggressiveness. This is to say that the terms or poles of these oppositions belong to the domain of the non-actual real, rather than the actual, so to *mis-identify* them with actualities is to make the mistake of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. This can be further developed by noticing that any one bearer of a subordinate position in such a binary opposition, e.g. an immigrant worker, will also bear many other social oppositions besides that—he may be a householder or engaged in a lucrative business. So the strategy of mobilising so to speak all the subordinated elements of these oppositions in a grand constituency of the oppressed also fails. This point is further reinforced by understanding that most individuals embody both aspects of these binary oppositions. Thus many if not all colonised peoples internalised to some extent the colonial mentality themselves, which led them to treat their own subordinates and even themselves in a neo-colonial and oppressive way. All of this means that because of the complexity, that is the multiple and plural determination of individual agents, the tactic of a unilateral lever, or a grand alliance of such levers, for effecting social change or emancipation fails.

In fact the only way forward is to understand these binary oppositions as marking out structures of master–slave relationships, all the terms of which have to be overthrown. The task of overcoming the totality of master–slave relationships must embrace the totality of those structures and can only be engaged by mobilising the totality of all human beings everywhere. This is not to say that it does not matter whether you are a worker or a capitalist, or a man or a woman, but that the minimum unit for emancipation has to be the totality of all human beings; and in the process of self-realisation we must understand that we embody aspects of both poles of not just socially constituted hierarchies and relations of oppression, but even of natural relationships or polarities. Thus men have to come to terms with their own feminine elements; gays have to understand their heterosexuality and so on.

At this point it is important to say something about a characteristic of **left-brain thought** which is our tendency to seeing the world in terms of binary oppositions (yes or no), sequential alternatives and in a linear way. The yes or no, black or white, master or slave, presupposes a simple opposition. But truly transformative practices generally need to go to the ground of such oppositions, which will involve intuitive, holistic and totalising modes of thought, which cannot be captured by a binary logic and which transcends the simple dualistic, dyadic oppositional thinking so characteristic of the world of duality. Thus to understand the role of master–slave relationships in stunting creativity one has to understand the creativity employed in sustaining them by the slaves as well as the masters who enslave themselves.

Once one moves to more specific **dyadic** oppositions, one will see that these are almost always false—e.g. there is never a question of mind or body, there is always a question of mind, body, feeling, underpinned moreover by transcendental or supramental properties of the ground-state, mediated by the levels of psychic being and the unconscious. The mind–body dichotomy reflects only the most barren and superficial view of the functioning of human agents. In the same way the relationship between capitalist and worker can never be read without the mediation of all the other master–slave relationships into which in any concrete case that one will be intricated. Indeed it is probably much simpler just to think in terms of the liberation as the clearing of the totality of human beings and the eradication of the emergent heteronomy, those forces and systems which have been called structural sin. These may actively have to be dissolved, but which in the last instance could not survive without draining and feeding off the energy of the ground-states of the embodied personalities who, in their practice, sustain them. And actually looking in terms of these fundamental categories and recipes provided by the philosophy of metaReality is perhaps as deep as we can realistically go. Because everyone will be a concrete singular and repressed in a multiplicity of ways, to give a general recipe will be misleading for all but one or two cases.

Section 6: Further Considerations on Binarity

In *Beyond East and West*[5] I will go more systematically into the origins of early religious civilisation from the enchanted world of primitive religion. I will show how a caste of mediators, priests and interpreters of omens arose, standing between ordinary human beings (tribespeople, etc.), together with mediators of absence and exchange, the organisation of conditional and contractual relationships through phenomena such as money, storage containers such as cities, which accumulated power through control of the water supply and irrigation works, with the advent of writing, the waging of war and the ubiquity of absence and the monetary tokens required for trade and payment or compensation of mercenaries. It was these primitive acts of exploitation which engendered the dynamics of the early civilisations, legitimated by the invocation of their gods. And the direct access to the enchanted realm that ordinary people had had through the presence of their ancestors, the spirits of the beings that surrounded them and the *shamans* who interpreted the phenomena of everyday life was thus wrested away from them, and available only to priests and certified authorities. In the interstices of early civilisations there grew a class of sramanacs who asserted unmediated access to the divine through practices of yoga, or within say Christianity, gnosis. As is well known, the Buddha became a wandering *saddhu* before his enlightenment; and the founders of desert monasticism, trying to maintain a direct link between the sphere of the divine and the mundane, unmediated by a priestly cast and other symbols of heteronomy, set up a parallel tradition.

Then there arose the idea that alongside a *higher truth*, which was the prerogative of the spiritually literate (and which could perhaps be accessed only by a few yogis observing the teachings of this reforming tradition), there should be an *ordinary truth* for the others. So no sooner was a tradition that made unmediated access to the divine once more initiated than a distinction between grades of access or levels of divinity was made. The beauty of Chinese Buddhism, under the influence of Taoism, particularly as

[5] Sage, 2002.

expressed in Zen, was to say: neither the higher truth nor the ordinary truth, but the higher truth in the ordinary truth; the *middle truth* or in Zen even *the truth of no truth* as ordinarily understood, that is the void or Buddha-nature in ordinary things. That is if you cannot see the Buddha-nature in your ordinary work, if you cannot see it in pain and suffering, then you cannot truly know god, or truly be one with the cosmic envelope. Since if you have to remove yourself from the bustle of the city, if you can never partake of the ordinary drudgery of everyday life, if you cannot see or trace the Buddha-nature in everything that exists, you cannot truly be one with the cosmic envelope that binds us all. Once more you de-totalise yourself from the rest of creation.

Strangely enough in the first abstract universality of the classical philosophical discourse of modernity, then in the elitist substitutionist universality of high modernism, particularly in its Marxist form, and then in the abstract universality of structuralism and poststructuralism, which may be regarded as a cross or hybrid of high modernism (the second phase of the discourse of modernity), and postmodernism (the fourth phase), in each case the perceiving, judging, classifying, the would-be-emancipating, was done by an agent who was not in or of the totality he described. The aporia of the classical discourse of modernity, including its Marxist and poststructuralist forms, I have discussed elsewhere.[6] I have stressed that the single most important criterion of philosophy is reflexivity, the absence of theory–practice inconsistency. Thus if Hume claims that he has no better reason for going out of the ground floor door than the second floor window and he *always* goes out of the ground floor door and *never* by the second floor window then we know without further ado that his system is fundamentally flawed. Similarly if an academician cannot situate himself within his discourse, cannot situate himself in the story he tells, then we know that he has left something crucial out.

Ultimately to be a reflexive being you must be able to adopt the first-person standpoint for every being in creation, that is to

[6] See, e.g. *Reflections on Meta-Reality,* especially Chapter 4.

say you must overcome every egocentricity, every binary oppositionality within and between yourself, your class, your caste, your occupation and the rest of the world, and you must overcome the binary opposition between god and yourself or the rest of the world. So the ideal of reflexivity is something to be striven for in practice and not just theory. Because, as long as some being is at odds with itself, then, it cannot realise its full potential. And no other being can be fully realised either. And that being, who is split between his theory and his practice, produces a split between your intentionality (and dharma) and his own. And any split in your intentionality means that you cannot fulfil your dharma and the unity of your theory in your practice, i.e. your intentionality will be undermined. So the ideal of unity of theory in practice can only be achieved in practice by the realisation of a goal which, as Marx nicely said, 'the world has long since dreamed of something of which it needs only to become conscious for it to possess in reality . . . '[7]

Section 7: One Single Act of Attention Can Change the World

In the enchanted world of primitive and civilised religion the power of attention is well known. This is why devotees lavish food on the statues of their gods. But this is also why we lavish attention on plants, pictures, the organisation of furniture in a room, generally on things. The idea of lavishing attention on a statue of a god is that in some way you animate the statue with the power of the divinity the statue represents—your attention evokes reciprocity, a reciprocal response. The power of attention in healing as a complementary therapy is well known—but the power of attention for healing in itself is enormous. In general, focusing on some aspect of your body in a relaxed way will do as much good to it as attending to the needs of a demanding child

[7] Marx adds 'to obtain forgiveness for its sins mankind need only declare them for what they are'. For 'declare' read 'clear' and this would be my viewpoint entirely—and by clear I mean just release, don't cling to them and your sins they will be no more.

in your care does to him. All these things turn on the reciprocity so characteristic of the world of enchantment. You might say that it is no wonder that little girls and boys no longer see fairies because we ceased believing in them so many decades ago. Of course you could also argue that such beings, denizens of a universe alongside, but in some respects mimicking and potentially interacting (at least on special occasions) with our own would, have been swept off the planet anyway by the terrible damage that we are doing to our natural environment. Of course one does not attend to what one does not believe exists. And if what exists is not held or kept in being by the acts of attention of human beings, then, in a striking example of intra-dependency, that is the occupancy within a single totality of the perceiver (or believer or reader) and that which they perceive (believe or read), then the object of their erstwhile attention will fade away.

Now whatever it is you attend to, whether your walking (e.g. in the practice of mindful walking) or some music, or another's words, or the unfolding narrative of a book, the deeper and the more concentrated your attention, the clearer and purer the moment of your attention, the deeper you will go into (and unite yourself with) that to which you attend. This can happen in two ways: either you sink your consciousness into that which you attend or you can sink it back into your attending. Whatever happens, whichever way you go, you will move towards a ground-state, closer to the cosmic envelope. And the longer and the deeper you stay there, the more you will change and clear yourself and the object of your attention, setting up reciprocal moves in a potentially universal direction for all like beings in the world.

The accordion effects of that single act of attention are thus enormous. But they do not stop there. For when you suspend your attention, at your ground-state, all the love, creativity, potential for intelligence and capacity for right-action will be unleashed in a torrent. A single act of attention in this way can simulate a millennium of meditation and prayer. Of course I am not arguing that it should substitute or replace such phenomena, merely that insofar as it does not require a special place, with a special technique, specially supervised, etc. it is something that can be practised anywhere. Actually when you understand that

there is nothing you could do without transcending, then you will discover how easy it is to transcend in or on anything; and you will find it very easy to touch ground-states and the cosmic envelope wherever you are. To become realised all you have to do is apply that principle throughout the totality of your being without ceasing to be actively engaged in the world.

Chapter Seven

The Gnosis of Freedom and the Fana of Fulfilment

Drum sound rises in the air,
its throb, my heart.

A voice inside the beat
says 'I know you're tired,
but come. This is the way'.

—Jellaludin Rumi

There was something containing all, before heaven and earth it exists;
Tranquil, oh! Incorporeal, oh! Alone it stands and does not change;
It goes everywhere and is not hindered; it can thereby become the universe's mother;
I know not its name; I characterise it by calling it the Way;
Forced to make a name for it I call it the Great;
Great I call the elusive; the elusive I call the far;
The far I call the returning

—Lao Tze

Section 1: Sublating the Sublation: The Philosophy of MetaReality and the Logic of Emancipatory Discourse

We have already seen how the philosophy of metaReality differentiates itself from almost all hitherto existing philosophies, including critical realism. The philosophy of metaReality brings to the fore non-duality as the ground, mode of constitution and deep structure of the world of duality and dualism. We can sharpen these differentiations a little bit as follows:

The philosophy of metaReality reflects the zone of non-duality and absolute reality; critical realism gives the best possible account of the realm of relative reality; and the irrealist philosophies critical realism critiques reflect the dualistic domain of demi-reality, the world of alienation, contradiction and split which dominates relative reality and in turn, as the dominant force in relative reality, both dominates and occludes absolute reality or the non-dual grounds of our existence. In virtue of its commitment to an investigation of being, and being as structured, differentiated and changing; understanding being as processual; understanding being as a totality or a whole; understanding being as incorporating transformative praxis and reflexivity; and in its latest stage understanding being as incorporating a spiritual dimension or aspect, critical realism digs deep enough to show how the realm of demi-reality rests on the possibility of a dual but non-alienated mode of being in relative reality. Moreover it reflects the aspirations seen at their best in many secular emancipatory projects, whether of liberal or socialist form, of a society free of gross inequity, oppression and affronts to human dignity and well-being. Insofar as it does this, it can claim an emancipatory potential which irrealist philosophies, merely reflecting the surface structures of our alienated world, must deny. However, without going into the sixth realm of re-enchanted being and the seventh zone or awakening of non-dual being, critical realism cannot identify the non-dual grounds and states and phases of our activity which currently underpin all the structures of oppression and heteronomy in our social order and point to the possibility of their liberation and dominance within the realm of relative reality in a society which will be free of the dualistic structures which currently

oppress us. In other words its emancipatory potential is severely hindered. The philosophy of metaReality therefore allows us to engage a triple metacritique, mainly of the—

> postmodernist critique of modernism;
> Marx's critique of Hegelian dialectic; and the
> structuralist (and poststructuralist) critique of historicism.

But it also sublates this sublation which is consistent with critical realism. So let us see how this is done.

The philosophy of metaReality brings to the fore concepts of non-duality, identity, identification, unity and unification, whereas critical realism (which the philosophy of metaReality sustains as a special case, mainly that case appropriate to the domain of relative reality) is still and fundamentally a philosophy of non-identity, of difference. Let us briefly recapitulate the two main ontological deepenings of the existing framework of critical realism. The seventh zone or awakening situates three modes of non-duality, established by different forms of argument. Thus a transcendental argument from what must be the case for everyday life to be possible shows the necessity for immediate, basic understanding and communication, that is transcendental identification in consciousness for any social understanding or indeed perception of the world; and for transcendental agency, that is basic non-dual spontaneous agency if we are to do anything at all. Secondly, through a number of procedures, including transcendental arguments as to what must be the case for the ideals implicit in emancipatory projects such as Marxism, which postulates the possibility of the society in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all, or of a social order which would conform to something like the Christian ethic of do unto others as you would be done by. Such projects must presuppose the actuality now of the possibility that is envisaged, that is to say they must presuppose that we, as we are currently constituted, have within us the possibility to be citizens of a communist or liberal or say Christian humanitarian Utopian.

Or we can establish the second level of non-duality, that defined by the concepts of the ground-state and the cosmic

envelope, where our ground-state characteristics are understood to consist in creativity, love and the capacity for right-action and so forth, and where our ground states are connected to the ground-states of all other beings on what I have called the cosmic envelope, by grounding it in the presuppositions of specifically religious emancipatory projects, on to which I will come in a moment. But it can also be established by considering what must be the case if any untoward or problematic situation in society today is to be sustained. Thus you can show that the oppressions of the capitalist order are dependent on the spontaneous free creativity of the immediate producers (and indeed also that of the capitalists themselves), a spontaneous free creativity which is something over and above the extraction of surplus value that Marxism theorises—a free creativity which is not coincidentally continuous with the free and spontaneous domestic labour of women in the household in reproducing, for nothing, labour power. Or you can look at what must be the case for a bank robbery to succeed; or a war to be prosecuted. And you will find that a bank robbery can only be successful if the bank robbers have a degree of solidarity and trust; and that a war depends on the solidarity of soldiers at the front, their willingness to serve and the for a (perhaps mistaken) cause and the support of their wives and sisters back home. These terrible phenomena are founded unilaterally on unconditional love.

We could apply this procedure and go through any level in the morphogenesis of action which I have discussed and we would see that any social activity or situation, no matter how horrible, is actually sustained by these noble ground-state qualities, which the Utopians of emancipatory discourse (whether secular or religious) have in a way rightly invoked. The really important point to note about the structure of this argument establishing the non-dual ground-states of our dual existence is that there is a relationship of unilateral dependency of the oppressive emergent level on the basic primary level.

The structure of this is as follows: the secondary level occludes and dominates the primary level on which it unilaterally depends. Therefore creative human beings could survive without oppressive or dysfunctional systems of economic or political or for that matter religious management and control. But those

systems could not survive without the creativity of human agents. In the same way human beings could survive without phenomena such as bank robberies or war, but war or bank robberies could not occur without the unconditional love of human beings, albeit in whatever distorted form it takes.

The third kind of non-duality we have been concerned with is the deep interior or fine structure of any moment of being. If you go into this deeply enough, if you just observe it, suspending all judgement, thought, emotional turbulence or anything else except that moment and, so observing, eventually you will experience identification with it, and the ground-state on which it depends, together with the love, intelligence, energy, bliss, etc. which characterises it. This experience corresponds to what was believed by traditional religious theorists to be uniquely characteristic of religious experience, whereas I am arguing that it is characteristic of all moments of experience, aspects of being, even of the most ordinary sort, in their deep interior. For, just observing, you will eventually find or trace that thing which you are observing back to what might be called its Buddha-nature, its emptiness or suchness, the bliss-consciousness of being or quality of pure unbounded energising love which defines a location on the cosmic envelope. So you can have the sort of experiences that people normally only experience when listening to great music or possibly in a moment of scientific inspiration, or certainly indeed through meditation or prayer, in any moment of life and in relation to anything. For anything to exist it must connect in some way to a ground-state and the cosmic envelope, and eventually through the power of your pure awareness, you will be able to access or reach the ground-state which constitutes it or upon which it depends or, in the case of something heteronomous or evil, which it drains. So in these three ways non-duality is thoroughly constitutive of being.

The sixth realm of re-enchantment can be established by considering the immediacy of mind-to-mind or better, consciousness-to-consciousness interaction. When I speak to you, you immediately understand me without the mediation of any physical causality. Following this line of argument, which we traced in the previous chapter, is a natural development of the idea already

postulated by critical realism that mind is an emergent power of matter. This immediacy of mind-to-mind interaction suggests an emergent level of causality, which may be extended to previous or future lives (as well as the realm of the after- or between-life itself); group, collective and species, even locational and spatial, as well as individual karma (clinging) and awakening (learning), etc. By considering the way in which when subject–object duality breaks down, say in transcendental identification in consciousness, the semiotic triangle collapses so that the world itself becomes immediately meaningful, we can explain how we can read and ultimately perceive the world as if it were a text because it is a text, it is meaningful, just as it is valuable or not, good or bad, right or wrong. The paradigm case of mind-to-mind interaction is a natural corollary of the thesis already established by critical realism of mind as a synchronic emergent power of matter. That it is an emergent power of matter is surely absolutely undeniable. It is the possession of mind or more accurately consciousness which uniquely defines what is human about human beings. It is only if human behaviour is *intentional* that we call it an action, rather than something, say instinctual or mechanical, like salivating or slipping on a banana skin that we feel we need to give an explanation for in specifically human terms. Otherwise it is a happening, a mere event, which could have happened to a thing which was not distinctively human. Anything which is distinctively human involves intentionality in some way.

Marx put this point very well when he said what is distinctive about human beings is that their life is founded on a double freedom—a freedom from instinctual determination, and a freedom to act in planned, pre-meditated ways. Of course mind is precisely the most prized product of our civilisation; and we can look on the one hand at the glories of a Beethoven symphony or a Bach cantata or on the other hand at the devastating economic and physical technologies we have produced which are wreaking havoc on our environment. Both equally are objectifications, products of mind. So the emergence of mind is not something that should strike us as being a surprise. If you have emergent mind then you are going to have emergent causality, that is causal connections between minds not mediated by physicality and then causal

connections of different sorts between other emergent aspects of being. The emergence of our emotional and mental and more generally conscious nature from physical matter incidentally establishes the plausibility of the thesis of re-incarnation, karma and the goal of moksha or liberation from the cycle of re-birth. Because it is clear that if mind is irreducible to matter, the chain of causes and effects in which we are in our subjective intentional doings interconnected may outlast, and for all we know pre-exist, our physical death and birth. I need not go further into this here, because the clearing of karma, understood as pain that you carry within you as a result of your intentional action is just part of the general clearing necessary to be a realised being, that is one who is located at his ground-state (what I earlier called the strong sense of self-realisation) or at least in consistency with his ground-state (the weaker sense). Actually anything which takes you away from or dissipates energy from your ground-state and its intentionality will be inconsistent with it; and if it is different and distinct from your ground-state and its intentionality, but an embodiment and expression of it, then it is merely a form of manifestation of your ground-state in the fields of relativity, as such an expression of your dharma and not just consistent with it. There is one further point to mention which is that, on reflection, there is not so much difference between karma, on the eastern interpretation, and the western Freudian unconscious (or more generally sub-conscious); in both cases awareness of the causal connection, relating past event to present condition, has become lost.

The assumption then behind secular utopias is that human beings already have all the powers that they need to currently constitute a utopian society. Of course if you argue that that is absurd, you can do that equally from inside the emancipatory discourse itself. Thus someone who believed in the secular ideals of Marx could say well of course, what we have today is not communist man. But what he must accept is that there is the actuality of the possibility of the realisation of communist man, a possibility which is not actualised because it is overlaid with elements which are non-communist or heteronomous. So the project must be, in the immortal words of Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach, to educate the educators, the transformers of society, and this means,

on the primacy of self-referentiality, their self-education, self-empowerment,[1] that is, their shedding of everything that prevents them expressing their true essential nature which Marxism along with other secular projects must presuppose. For if it was not already there, as a real possibility, where is it going to come from? The project of something like individual self-realisation, that is of making yourself into a being capable of sustaining and flourishing as a citizen of a communist utopia, is implicit in the ideal of Marxism (and you could carry out this exercise for any other secular emancipatory project with universalising ideals). But of course just to be an isolated emancipated or, we can say, realised being is not sufficient for communism. For communism requires a society in which, to quote Marx's words, 'the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all'. That means it presupposes a society in which not only is it the case that your freedom is as important to me as my own, but you feel that my freedom is as important to you as yours and everyone feels the same. In other words it presupposes a universalisation of the clearing or shedding of all that is heteronomous in all human beings in a communist society. And of course we would have to clear up the residue and mess left by pre-existing society, the disused mines, the debris and decay of cities downtown, the toxins and pollution in the atmosphere, etc.

Having argued that secular utopias presuppose individual and universal self-realisation, it will probably come as no surprise to the reader that I am going to argue that religious emancipatory discourses presuppose the same. There are two great traditions or streams of the religions of civilisation. The first stems from ancient India and the Vedas, generated not only Hinduism but Buddhism and through the interaction of Buddhism with Chinese and Far-Eastern spirituality, developing Confucianism, Taoism, etc. we had the fertile currents of Far-Eastern (and indeed southern East-Asian) Buddhism, including possibly most notably Zen. This trend is overtly immanentist, that is to say that it believes that there is a divine ingredient within each human being, which defines the most basic level of his being and sets him

[1] Cf. *From Science to Emancipation*. Sage Publications, 2002, Chapter 11.

the project of realising that divine ingredient in the field of the relative existence in which he must live his earthly life. To put it another way, it presupposes an ultimate level of being which is divine, which is ingredient in human beings and which must be liberated and unfolded in the world of relativity. At the same time these religions presuppose that there is a divine ingredient within all other beings and insofar as these beings are connected then they are connected at an ultimate level of the universe which is something like my concept of the cosmic envelope. Here it is easy to see that these religious discourses set man the goal of individual self-realisation but because we as individual human beings are inextricably bound up with other beings and the rest of the universe their unfreedom will automatically stymie my own. We can only freely fulfil ourselves if we live in a social order and a natural world in which everyone else is free. At an even deeper level we can see that when we are at the level of our divine ingredience then we feel no sense of separateness from the rest of nature so we experience the unfreedom of other beings as part of our own. Within this religious stream then there is a commitment once more to individual and universal self-realisation; and we see very clearly here, as in the secular case, that individual self-realisation is radically incomplete without universal self-realisation; and that in a certain sense we cannot be free as individuals unless and until we are all free as realised beings. Likewise this project is committed to the clearing of all that is inconsistent within human being with its ground-state essence and the individual human being in his activity is committed to the liberation of everything in any other being which is inconsistent with that being's ground-state essence. None of this presupposes that we all have the same ground-state. In fact the concrete singularity, the uniqueness of our dharmas or our individuality is something to be expected and treasured, not as has been the case in so many both secular and religious projects, devalued, denied.

Let us now turn to the other great wing of the religious thought of civilisation. This stems from ancient Egypt and it took both Greek and Judaic wings. Although the Greek wing was polytheistic, the Judaic wing was monotheistic and explicitly committed to a transcendentalist conception of the divine; that is

to say in Judaism, Christianity and Islam to mention the three most celebrated offshoots of ancient Egyptian thought, god is other than and outside man. (Of course Christianity allows the holy ghost which may be summoned up as a force within him; but nevertheless the godhead itself remains outside.) What is the aim of life according to these religious traditions, what defines a human being's most basic or ultimate purpose? He has it within him to conform to god's will. It is god's will for him which defines the most ultimate, the most basic parameters of his being; therefore he must have within him the conditions of possibility of leading an existence which conforms to god's will; and if he is not now conforming to god's will then this is not the fault of god but his fault and he must clear or shed everything within him that prevents him being the being that, so to speak, god intended him to be—that is being a being who conforms to god's will. Here again we have the idea of the most basic form of human existence presupposed by all other forms as being one which is actual and present in man but obscured and overlain by heteronomous elements; and the project here again is to realise himself in such a way as to conform to god's will. You could say that what it is that is within himself that enables him to conform to god's will is just, what on an immanentist interpretation I have been calling the divine ingredient. Be that as it may, there is no *need* to make this further equation, although it is interesting to note that in Kabbala and in the practices of the Essenes in Judaism, in desert monasticism and gnostic Christianity and above all perhaps in Sufism, in Islam, we have practices which are almost identical, and a subcurrent of belief which is similar to those within the Vedic tradition.[2] Now if it is the most fundamental thing about a human being on, let us say, the western wings line, that he has a duty to realise god's will for him, equally each human being has a duty to realise god's will not only for himself but for all other beings too. Thus he must be committed to the project of *theosis*, that is to the realisation of god's will for all beings everywhere. So once more we have a commitment to individual and universal self-realisation.

[2] See my forthcoming *Beyond East and West*, Sage Publications 2003.

What I am arguing then is that all emancipatory projects point in exactly the same direction. But there is an even stronger argument at hand, which does not depend on any pre-existing tradition. And this argument goes as follows: whatever objective you set yourself in life, it will be very important to be clear and single-pointed about it. Now if you have an objective in life which is inconsistent with your ground-state then the one thing you can certainly say is that you are not going to achieve it. Because the one thing you could never lose is the intentionality of your ground-state, the most basic level of your being. So eventually you will be set on a dialectic which will force you back into a position of consistency with your most fundamental nature, that is your ground-state essence. So you do not have to have any particular ideological or spiritual, whether secular or religious, objective in mind, given only the norm of clarity and the inevitability that if you set yourself an objective inconsistent with your ground-state your intentionality will be split and so unfulfilled. This will take you back to the goal of self-realisation, that is consistency with your ground-state as a condition for achieving any other objective you seek. By the same token you will realise, by inwardly experiencing, the inseparability of your own freedom from that of all other beings and, more overtly, by outwardly recognising that unfreedom existing anywhere in your environment will block the blossoming of your own freedom and power, that exactly the same dialectic will take you to a commitment to universal self-realisation.

So what I am arguing is really a very strong thesis: that all emancipatory discourses, whether secular or religious, entail exactly the same ideal or commitment, but equally that any objective in life will practically imply that too. Humankind has only ever had one goal in life; all that has varied has been the ideological format in which it has been presented and the rituals and measures prescribed for its achievement.

Section 2: The Dialectic from Self-realisation to God-realisation

We have seen the inexorability of the commitment to clarity and social transformation in the specific forms of self-realisation and

universal self-realisation. Now the argument can be taken even further, through the phenomenon of what I call co-presence. This depends on our capacity to transcendentally identify with everything and the primacy of self-referentiality—that is the way in which, for example, no-one else but you can act in your place here and in your time now, that necessarily only you can act, or the fact that really when you think about it no-one can ever teach anyone anything, which they do not accept, see or get, which they do not already in a way possess, which is the truth of Platonic anamnesis. This suggests that what we have within us, in virtue of the fact that *only* we can transcendentally identify and the fact that we can do that in principle with anything, is the **totality**; albeit in an unawakened form. That is to say that each being has co-present within it, enfolded within it, the totality of all other beings, or at least there essential natures, ground-states or alethic truths. As we develop in life we can imagine that in building more and more skills and realising more and more of our potential, we will gain the capacity to be one with more and more in the universe (all of which is implicitly enfolded within us). And in this becoming one with more and more in the universe we would be simultaneously unfolding the potentials within us. And at the limit we will become one with the totality that is the ground-states of all beings on the cosmic envelope, formerly enfolded within us, as powers in our being at present so to speak, now unfolded through us.

At this point we have become one with the totality and at this point we can talk of god-realisation. This unification with god is presumably what Jesus meant when he said, 'to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my father in his throne' (*Revelation* 3:21). Now if any one being can become one with all beings, then by the same token all beings can become one with all other beings, that is with every being. At this point we have universal god-realisation. And this is where the dialectic of history, of the world of becoming, would end. What, if anything, would lie on the other side we can only conjecture. This becoming of all beings implies of course a radical historicisation of our conceptions of the evolutionary process (as already discussed); it

implies that an amoeba can in principle and eventually fully realise the essence of Mozart or Leonardo, of Socrates, Jesus or Buddha.

If my argument earlier in the book is correct, then it is the characteristics of the deep interior which is the attractive pull in the evolutionary process, qualities, negatively experienced as emptiness or absence but positively evoked such as bliss or love, which leads to the unfolding of the enfolded properties of a being. This would mean:

1. That each being and each species eventually would tend, in evolutionary process, towards the goal of god-realisation
2. Beings would transmute through species and/or species themselves evolve as new potentials, implicit within them, were awakened and unfolded in diachronic time
3. Self-realisation, and the conditions for self-realisation (including what is normally called 'enlightenment'), would continually have to be redefined for the being and/or a species concerned, as its own, unfinished evolutionary process continued.

This idea of the unfinished evolution of the species is one which I introduced as early as *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. But, if it is radically true, in the manner suggested by the theory of co-presence, then it means that our conceptions of enlightenment, self-realisation, and emancipation themselves have to be seen as evolving, continually refined, redefined and even recast, in a potentially never-ending, and, if it does have a determinate end state, unforeseeable (given the falsity of historicism), way. This also provides a corrective to my tribute to ordinary human beings in everyday life, in the Preface of *Reflections on Meta-Reality*, in the sense that obviously, both at an individual and social level, we have far to go for any given level of realisation. Furthermore, if this argument is correct, then once we reach a certain level of realisation, either as individuals, groups or species, then the goal posts are shifted, the bar of the high jump lifted, and the criteria for self-realisation, etc. continually raised. This is another warning against trying to put an ontologically monovalent stop to historical process, either in the field of relative reality or, diving down to the zone of non-duality, at that of absolute reality.

Section 3: Syntheses of Self-realisation and Paradoxes of the Path

It is easy to see that many of the apparent oppositions and dichotomies thrown up by the world of duality and dualism are dissolved in the kind of philosophy of rich, differentiated developing (evolutionary) identity and identification of metaReality. Thus there is no opposition at all between self-change and social change. For the moment you change yourself you are in the first instance immediately making society better, since you are part of society. Secondly, by becoming better yourself you will become a better agent. Thirdly, insofar as you reach down to your ground-state then you will be maximising your potential to aid the liberation of all beings and in particular the clearing of n-dimensionally generalised social space. There is another way to look at this also. That is that although through the first four theorems on action which I discussed in Chapter 4 we arrived at the vantage point of the priority of self-referentiality, the impossibility of acting anywhere except through yourself; at the same time in the subsequent theorem, we showed that whenever you act at all you necessarily act on all four planes of social being and potentially affect all beings in the universe. So there is nothing private or individualistic about what you do. And such synthesis could be multiplied indefinitely I leave this as an exercise to the reader.

The paradoxes are legion too and they stem from the same source, namely the limited and dichotomous thinking of the world of duality and dualism. If you go beyond that world then truth will appear as a paradox from the standpoint which remains within that world that you have surpassed. Thus we now know that

You create by unthinking (Chapter 3)
You must be part of what you see (Chapter 6)
To act rightly and live well you must surrender (Chapter 5)
The only thing you actually love, whatever you think, is god (Chapter 4)
You mis-identify who you really are (Chapter 2)
The wise man knows nothing (Chapter 3)
(this one is relatively well known)
The poor will inherit the earth (Chapter 5)

You feel, see and do things from the totality of your inner body field, not a localised point on or in it (Chapter 6)

(this one too is quite well known, though not properly understood or analysed)

Every particular is a universal and every universal is particularised (Chapter 4)

The virtuous man follows no ethical rules (Chapter 4)

(and finally this one is also well known)

If you think you are meditating, you are not meditating. And so on.

What can we say about the path, the way to self-realisation? First we can say that there must be no dichotomy or split between means and ends, no now which postpones a future, no here which sees the goal there. In fact we have seen that the characteristics of non-duality lie at the level of the ground-state, the most fundamental level of the universe; in the constitution of everyday life, the most ordinary quotidian things you could do; and in the deep interior of each moment of experience or being, as in the experience of the mystic—in each of these modes alike. Similarly enlightenment is continuous with transcendence (which we have seen to be a feature of ordinary life and something we all do, whether we know we do it) and enlightenment itself is not a fixed point, but part of an evolutionary process subject even within our physically revealed cosmos as far as we know to potentially unending, evolving, thresholds of awakening.

What though are the central properties of this path, this way which in some way must be lived now? There are a number of declensions of them. First, on a Christian point of view, the life you lead should be above all characterised by love, you should be in fact love itself, full of love and only love. Or we can say you should be maximally coherent, everything you do should flow easily and effortlessly from you. Or we can say you should be completely clear, like a translucent vessel with no dust to disturb its translucent irradiating qualities. Or we can say, along with the Taoists, that you should be empty. Now we have seen ways in which these, and these are only some four characterisations, lead

naturally into each other. Thus if you start by clearing, you will see that what this means is in-building everything that you know, your skills, your virtues and your insights into your innermost being so that they no longer clutter around in your head, so that you are empty and in that sense also clear. Then what you do would be maximally coherent, efficacious for the whole of your environment and the cosmos including yourself. And coherence is in fact a property of love, the binding power of the universe. For we have seen that love is not soppy or sentimental, but in its essence strong, the strongest thing, the mightiest power in the cosmos. Be that as it may, when you are clear you would be a manifestation of your ground-state and the ground-state quality at the level of the emotions (which are the nodal points, as I will come to in a moment, in our world, that is the world of our everyday existence and our embodied personalities), is love, so you will just be expressing love and that love will be binding together the different aspects of your being. So love, coherence, clarity and emptiness are just a few of the ways we can characterise the way which is the end, the way which is the goal, the means which is the end.

So then, insofar as you want a formula, you can say the path is one of continual **clearing**, continual in-building of experience in all its forms, so continuing **emptiness**, of focused attentive activity, in the here and now, resulting in **coherence**, manifesting unconditional love, always concretely singularised to its objects, and your relationship to them.

I remarked a moment ago that the emotions (and hence love) are a kind of nodal point in our existence. This we saw in Chapter 4 when I talked about the double loop of love: the way in which it joins and mediates mind and body and embodied personality and the world in which it must live. This world of course is an n-dimensionally generalised, four-planar social world and a world constituted by categorial error, so it is a world that loops in society and philosophy in the form of categorial truth or error. In fact anything you do intentionally will be mediated by your emotions. And your emotions will internalise social forms and be externalised in what you reproduce or objectify in your daily activity and so will help to sustain or undo the categorical

errors which rivet our existing demi-real world. So it is a good point, this is a noble point on which you can start working.

Section 4: Reassessing the Philosophical Discourses of Modernity and Religion

I will elaborate the elements of critique of the philosophical discourse of modernity. We will see that this is structured by an original problematic in which atomistic individuals are set against each other and opposed to an object world. There relations with each other and that object world are governed by instrumental reasoning and described by abstract actualistic analytical universals. Critical realism begins to essay a critique of this world, the philosophy of metaReality deepens it. The metacritiques of postmodernism turn on the fact that in its salutary reaffirmation of identity and difference against the abstract actualistic universals of the original discourse, it throws out the baby of unity or universality with the bathwater of actualism. Critical realism sustains this by showing how concrete singularity is compatible with dialectical universality. MetaReality shows how these concrete singulars are in fact united at the level of their ground-states on their cosmic envelope and so gives a deep base to the emancipatory potential of critical realism.

Another fashionable ideology of the recent history of modernity is that of poststructuralism and structuralism before it. The failing of all these discourses is that they de-totalise the observer, the perceiver and his perspective from that which he observes. We have seen that in fact this de-totalisation is an extraordinary and rather academic error. However not only must the observer include himself in the field in which he observes, the agent must live his life in awareness, that is self-awareness of his own activity, the continuing witness of everything that he does, whether he does it in the dual or a non-dual mode. Actually the philosophy of metaReality says that in the end the only vantage point is indeed the totality, that you have the totality implicitly enfolded within you and that this will be your ultimate perspective; and that only when you have that perspective will you truly embody the unity of theory and practice, which is the guiding norm of philosophy.

To turn now to Marxism, this is well known as asserting its materialism. Materialism is an extraordinarily under-analysed concept. It can be used to assert the irreducibility of social forms to purely individual human action. And that is fine as long as one realises that social forms are not just out there, they are also in here, inherent in us, and we are the agents who reproduce and transform them and through whom the whole social circuit flows. An even more popular interpretation of materialism is to take a technological determinist line, arguing that everything is ultimately determined by technology. That too is fine. Certainly the discovery of fire, the invention of the wheel, gun powder, the electronic chip, are all momentous discoveries or inventions. But what is the technology exactly? The technology is either an idea or the embodiment, that is the objectification, of an idea in matter. We could talk about the primacy of the economic level. Another popular inflection or interpretation of materialism is to argue that everything is basically governed by material laws, a line that is suggested by Marx's polemics against Hegel's speculative illlusion, that is the way in which he saw everything that happened in history as the demi-urge of the ideal. Now that again is fine. The point however is how is a critique of Hegel, or an emancipatory discourse such as Marx's analysis of capital, supposed to understand itself, and be effective in history in the consciousness of oppressed peoples and specifically in the class consciousness of the working class unless ideas are effective in history.

So the critique that critical realism would make is that ideas are a vital and emergent part of the social scene. The philosophy of metaReality builds on this even further by arguing that ideas must be seen as manifestations of consciousness and as such they have emergent relations and connections which are not mediated in any way by physical causality. And that moreover since we can identify, come into transcendental identification with purely material things, there must be an implicit consciousness enfolded within them. And that if it is implicitly enfolded within them and the evolutionary process evolves it out of them, then there must have been at an original point or a foundational moment, an involution, in which what was being unfolded was enfolded (and that synchronic enfolding may itself have presupposed a [prior]

diachronic process in time, such as in the 'creation'). In that sense matter then appears as an emergent power or manifestation of consciousness, and in fact its grossest manifestation. We can imagine if you like that at the beginning of time, with the big bang, everything evolved out of something, that initial impulse (an impulse that we have to say is out of nothing), but in that impulse were contained the potential for the symphonies of Mozart and the discoveries of Faraday and Einstein, the poems of Rumi and Tagore. All that was there enfolded in the original moment. So there is implicit consciousness in everything, if there was not we would not be bound together in one universe. Whatever exists in that universe must be implicit in everything else in that universe or it would not be a single universe.

As for the critique of the philosophical discourse of religion the most important points to note here are the compatibility of transcendent and immanent interpretations; the necessity of ontological realism about god, entailing a plurality of epistemological or social interpretations; that is, to put it bluntly, there may be one god but he may be interpreted or understood in terms of different interpretative traditions or religions. Even more basically the absolute understood in impersonal terms, as a concept like non-duality, transcendence, the ground-state etc. which lack any personal characterisations, must always manifest itself in the relative world in some specific personalistic form, at least to us human beings. Thus belief in an impersonal *atman* is quite consistent with devotion to a personal manifestation of pure spirit, say in Rama or Krishna or even Ganesh or Hanuman. How else would the absolute manifest itself to human beings in the field of relativity except under some human form? There are many other aporia within the field of religion which will be explored in Volume 2 of this work. But it is important to see that while we lost a lot, with the replacement of the enchanted world of the philosophical discourse of religion by the disenchanted discourse of modernity, what we gained was a global interconnectedness through the base mediums of money and power, which do universally connect us even in our present global crisis at all four planes of social being. In fact we can say that for the first time the struggle in the world is not between two opposing dual powers,

but between a monological, monolithic power at the level of duality and the realm of non-duality on which it depends. So the struggle is not between two warring factions, but the struggle between war and peace; the struggle not between two forms of hatred, but between hatred and the love on which it depends. This struggle in virtue of that unilateral dependency which we have already noted there can only be one winner and one outcome: that is the dissolution or absorption of hatred in love.

Section 5: Considerations on Comparative Religion and Spirituality

Consideration 1

In *From East to West* I argued for a synthesis of eastern and western traditions. In this book and more fully in *Beyond East and West* I argue not for a synthesis, but for a transcendence of this and related distinctions and dualisms. In *FEW* I argued for a spiritual and transcendental radicalisation of (dialectical) critical realism. Here I am arguing for a position which can no longer be called critical realist—the philosophy of metaReality. This is a position which turns on the centrality of non-duality, identity, identification and unification versus the non-identity (and hence duality) which remains a characteristic feature of critical realism, both in its diachronically foundational moment as transcendental realism (in *A Realist Theory of Science*) and structurally or systemically (synchronically) as the defining feature of the first moment of the system of dialectical critical realism—1M ontology. But the non-duality turns on conceptions of identity and unity which are differentiated and developing; and which are consistent with struggle in a way which I will explain below.[3]

Consideration 2

Any objective involves a commitment to self (and universal self-) realisation. The spiritual impulse is not other-worldly, but

[3] In particular, struggle, as or in the process of becoming a non-dual being, in the world of duality, involving necessary dualistic, either oppositional or non-oppositional, activity.

entails a standpoint of practical mysticism (and never more so than today). This tradition has stressed, at least in most of its canonical forms, the primacy of self-referentiality, that is self-change; but you can be a realised being but not free to fulfil (or fully express) your dharma or essential nature in the world as it is constituted today unless this world is free of heteronomy and non-duality, i.e. unless all other beings (who impinge on your own freedom) are themselves self-realised, and it therefore involves a commitment to universal self-realisation.

At the same time whatever earthly objective you might set yourself, the norm of single-pointedness or clarity which is a condition for the achievement of any earthly objective will take you (because of the inexorable presence of the intentionality of your ground-state) to a position of conformity with your ground-state. That is to the shedding of your ego, and total clarity in your mental, emotional and physical being, that is no ego, clear mind, a pure heart and a healthy body leading to (spontaneous) right, in the sense of maximally efficacious, action. Once more you will find that you cannot fulfil your identity, dharma until all beings are realised too. When you are clear or realised, then you can be said to be a non-dual being in the world of duality.

Consideration 3

What is religion trying to do? Let us consider some explanations:

1. Sociological—to bind, cohere society
2. Philosophical—to explain the mysteries of the universe
3. Anthropological—to explain the significance of man and/or the nature of the human condition
4. Pragmatic—to show how human beings can become happier or achieve their objectives more easily

On each of these explanations religion is being construed essentially dialectically, as building a greater social (1), theoretical (2), anthropological (3), and/or (4) practical totality, remedying absences, incompletenesses, exclusions, alienations.

Consideration 4

What then is the role of God? God is conceived as:

(a) Explaining the origin of the universe (as creator)
(b) As constituting or sustaining the universe (of course including man), and/or
(c) As in some sense, the end of man, either cosmologically and/or teleologically (as the goal to which man aspires).[4]

If man was made by or is constituted essentially (so that the parameters of his being, his essential, most basic or fundamental nature is as defined by god) or is ordained to find and reflect god in himself, then the most fundamental fact about man is that, defined by his unilateral dependency on the divine, in order to be happy, to fulfil his intentionality, he must fulfil and reflect back god's own intentionality—both within (cf. self-realisation) and outwith (cf. universal realisation) himself. That is to say, to put this in the arguably more difficult terms of transcendent interpretations of god, he must obey (conform, perfectly reflect) and fulfil god's intentionality, which he does by reflecting (now switching to the easier immanent interpretation) the divine ingredient within him. On either interpretation—that is the transcendent interpretation of conformity to god's will external to himself, or the immanent interpretation of reflecting or fulfilling the divinity within himself—it is the divine or god which defines the most essential features and parameters of his being, which constitute the conditions of possibility of his fulfilling the divine within himself or conforming to god's will in his being and activity. On any interpretation of the relationship between god and man, man's role is to fulfil the divine (god's) intentionality both within and outside himself. There is no possible conflict between self-realisation, in the sense of the realisation of the divine ingredient within a human being, or the conformity of human being to god's will for him, and universal self-realisation, that is the realisation of the divine ingredient outside that human being or the realisation by that human being of god's will in the world external to him. On any interpretation, the first is a condition of the second; but the practice of self-realisation entails that at each step the seeker

[4] These correspond respectively in the Hindu cosmo-theology to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

will more exactly fulfil god's intentionality, in his actions on the world, that is outside himself. So that, to put it simply, as the individual human being becomes better or clearer or closer to his ground-state, so he will act better or more clearly or more in conformity to the cosmic envelope, i.e. in his dealings with the world outside.

So the only way for man to be (with god or the divine either constituting or defining the basic parameters of his being and situation) is conformity with, or surrender to, or realisation of the divine parameters both inside and outside them. The first is the yoga of self-realisation and the second the fana of annihilation (or effective replacement) by god—God-realisation. So there is a single path that man can tread.

In cosmo-theologies we have four-five cycles of creation:

The original impulse or lightening flash, or primordial emanation
The moment of creation
The moment of shaping or formation
The moment of making or objectification.

And the goal is the reflection or fulfilment of the original impulse. So religion is the 'binding back' (what it means in Latin) of man to his destiny, that is reflecting back the divine to the divine, that is his creation to the creator. The complete realisation of this project would be what some medieval Christian theologians called theosis, that is the maximal realisation of the presence of god, or the divine will, in the whole of being.

These five cycles of creation correspond to five moments in the genesis of every human action:

The moment of will (or original intentionality or impulse)
The moment of thought
The moment of feeling or emotion
The moment of physical objectification, and
The moment of the fulfilment of the agent's (the human agent) intentionality in the world.

So as man stands to god, man's actions stand to man himself. The purpose of any intentionality for man is that it should be fulfilled in the world, perfectly reflecting his intention or impulse. And the purpose of man's being is that he should perfectly reflect the divine, within himself, or realise that condition of possibility within his own being which will enable him to reflect or fulfil the divine will. This is what is meant by the saying or thought that man is made in the image of god.

There can be no contradiction between god's intentionality or will and man's intentionality or will, properly conceived, because god's intentionality or will is precisely that which defines the most essential features of man, what I have been calling in secular terms, man's ground-state, the most fundamental or basic level of his being. And we can never eliminate or out-perform our ground-states, any more than we can eliminate or second-guess the cosmic envelope within which our action must be realised (or not).[5] And these five cycles in the genesis of action (and the formation of man) correspond also to five features of our ground-states:

Freedom
Creativity
Love
Right-action and
Fulfilment of intentionality (or reflection back)

Finally these five cycles or components of any creative process correspond also to five levels of ontology:

The level of being
The level of being processually, that is of being conceived as process
Being conceived as a whole, or a totality
Being conceived as incorporating potentially self-conscious transformative agency
Being conceived as reflexively

[5] It can be seen that all talk of conformity to god's will can be transposed in an immanent and ultimately secular way, in terms of the realisation of our most essential nature. Similarly secular or immanent interpretations can always be construed as entailing the satisfaction of that condition of possibility that we

These five moments of ontology correspond to the five levels of the systems of (transcendental) dialectical critical realism; and also to five moments in the development of critical realism as a dialectical process.[6] As already remarked, the distinctive extensions of ontology which the philosophy of metaReality establishes, the sixth realm of enchantment and the seventh zone/or awakening of non-duality, do not themselves change the structure of the cycle of creation or the moments in the genesis of human action, although they do make alternative resolutions of the cycle of creation possible (as seen in Section 3) and enable action, at more subtle or refined levels, to be possible and indeed necessary independently of physical objectification.

Can man achieve this goal of self-realisation alone? In one sense, yes, the task must be realisable; and all man has to do is be or become what he already essentially is, eliminating everything he is essentially not, so as to allow what he essentially is to flower or flourish in the way in which an acorn turns into an oak.[7] But in another sense, no, for clearly human beings are relationally defined (to be is to be related) and the human being must always act in circumstances which are not (or not obviously immediately) created by himself. For this he needs help—this may be the help of the 'guru' (on eastern, immanent interpretations) or the help of 'grace' (on western, transcendent interpretations) or, (a bit of both) destiny, luck, fate, etc. But whatever interpretation given to the external component, it depends on the principle of reciprocity, which in its simplest terms may be formulated in terms of 'like attracts like'. So as a human being grows and develops, raising his level (so to speak) of vibration or attunement he will attract or gravitate towards (or find gravitating towards himself) precisely what he needs for the completion or fulfilment of his task—since his actions will have attracted the appropriately vi-

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have within ourselves to reflect or conform to god's will, which god having created, sustained or teleologically defined us, has made for us what is most essential to our being.

[6] Cf. my *Reflections on Meta-Reality*.

[7] Cf. Marx's aphorism that 'man only sets himself such tasks as he can solve'; the intuition here being that we only have a problem when the tools for its solution are to hand.

brating external response in the way a jigsaw fits round a piece.

So man must work for the elimination of the elements of heteronomy, what is inconsistent with the divine, both within and outside himself—the former defining the task of individual self-realisation and the latter that of universal self-realisation. As individually self-realised, he will be a non-dual being, that is one consistent with or at his ground-state. The important point to realise is that ground-states differ. Everyone's dharma is unique. So what is right and what is wrong cannot be defined abstractly, in terms of analytical universals or actualistic rules.

Consideration 5

We come now to the important concept of transcendence, which must be understood in two senses—a relative and an absolute sense. In the relative sense A transcends B if it resolves, overcomes or surpasses the problems of B. In an absolute sense it is defined by the characteristic of non-duality.

There are four types of transcendence:

1. The retreat from objectivity into the subjectivity of the self
2. The identification of a subject with an object, its absorption into that object
3. Transcendental agency
4. Transcendental teamwork or holism

The retreat of a subject's consciousness into himself is of course very familiar to us from the classical Vedic tradition, stressed by yoga, Vedanta and many schools of Buddhism; its essence is meditation, or prayer or something which has a similar effect. The second type of transcendence, transcendental identification with an object, is also familiar to us through the Vedic tradition, and has perhaps been best thematised by that Chinese, then Japanese, offshoot of Buddhism (itself of course a product of the Vedic tradition) called Zen. Thus Zen monks will practise going into objects, discovering the Buddha-nature within them, becoming one with their essential being—not just objects we all may find easy to identify with, like a gorgeous sunset or a mountain scene or a beautiful piece of music, but things like a corner of a room, a broom or a lamp post. What has not really been appreciated is

that this form of transcendentall identification, transcendental identification in consciousness, is a necessary feature for any social life. I can only communicate to you, understand you, in this way—and in listening and following me, you are immediately one with my words. In the same way when you watch television you are immediately one with what you watch, or if you talk with a friend, or read a newspaper, you are immediately one with them directly. Transcendental agency (the third form of transcendence) is equally essential, a necessary condition for anything we do at all. It defines the basic or spontaneous component within action, which is a necessary condition for the performance of any action at all. For at some point we must just do things, not do things by thinking about them or by doing other things. Unless we just did things, like tying our shoelaces or talking or switching on a light—and did them directly, not by thinking about how to do them or by thinking about something else, we could never do anything. The fourth form of transcendence, transcendental teamwork, is also very familiar to us, not just in the performance of actors or musicians as a group, but in our own joint or co-dependent actions with others in our daily life. Of particular interest to us here is the fact that transcendental identification in consciousness (the second form of transcendence) is the basis of the stress, there in all religious traditions, but perhaps most prominent in the ancient Egyptian one, particularly in the form it took in Christianity, on love; while transcendental agency, necessitating right-action at some level, is a feature of this tradition, with its theme of obedience to the divine will, whether in Judaism, Christianity or Islam, and also the continuation of this theme in the form of service in secular interpretations as well.

Transcendental identification in consciousness and transcendental agency are necessary features of human life. It is not difficult to see that we can transcendentally identify with anything, and this means since our transcendental identification is an equating in consciousness, that the whole of the universe must be implicitly conscious too. (This depends upon dispositional realism.) Thus we are bound together in one cosmic envelope. We have already introduced the concept of the ground-state, as that state of our being which most essentially defines us, the inten-

tionality, energy and consciousness of which we can never remove; and shown how this necessitates ultimately an inexorable drive to consistency with the ground-state, whether this is given an immanent or transcendent religious interpretation as the divine (the realisation of the divine within or conformity to the divine without) or a purely secular one.

There are three senses in which non-duality comes in to the argument:

1. The ubiquity of non-duality, especially in transcendental identification and agency as a necessary feature of human being and social life—though this will not necessarily be consistent with our ground-state. Thus one can non-dualistically tell a lie or perform a heinous action.
2. The ubiquity of the intentionality and properties of the ground-state in human being and action—though this will not necessarily be manifest in a non-dual form. Thus expression of our ground-state energy, consciousness and intentionality and our properties of creativity, love and right-action will normally occur in the context of heteronomously constituted complex ensemble, as just one feature of our being and action.
3. The sense in which every instance of non-duality is a microcosmic, heterocosmic instance or proleptic flash of the state of non-duality of enlightenment, emancipation, more generally non-dual being or non-dual world or being in a non-dual world, such as 'heaven on earth'. Thus even non-dualistic states and phases of our being and activity which are removed from our ground-state qualities or which are manifestations of those ground-state qualities in a complex (compromise, including heteronomously co-determined ensemble), nevertheless enable us to glimpse, constitute an anticipation, actually presuppose, elements of 'heaven' (secular or non-secular) in every moment of our daily life, a continuous reminder of the immanence, or presence, of the divine (or, in secular terms, the ideal) in our daily life.

There are three implications of transcendental identification:
I. Transcendental identification in consciousness entails the

consistency of consciousness as a synchronic and diachronically emergent power of matter and of matter as synchronically implicit or enfolded (and diachronically explicated or unfolded) power of consciousness. In particular it means that all being is implicitly conscious, and that consciousness is enfolded in all being.

II. This has two aspects:

(A) Transcendental identification in consciousness is direct, that is mind-to-mind, feeling-to-feeling, person-to-person (or object), consciousness-to-consciousness. What is irreducible in social life is the immediacy of hearing, perceiving generally, understanding, intuiting, reading, etc.—and more generally the irreducibility of 'just seeing it'. In virtue of this, being becomes immediately meaningful and valuable, i.e. reality becomes re-enchanted. This is the first sub-implication of the second aspect of transcendental identification. And note that this directly meaningful and evaluative nature of being and the direct mind or consciousness to mind or consciousness nature of these identifications are unmediated by physical causality; and the directly meaningful nature of being is connected to its processual character that we can continually learn from a changing world and that the immediately evaluative nature of being is connected to the breakdown of the distinction between the sacred and the profane—for on the reinterpretation that I am giving here everything is sacred and nothing is totally profane.

(B) But the identification achieved is not just only of consciousness (not just formal rather than substantial) or of consciousness distinct from activity, but of the properties embodied and connected with the consciousnesses identified. Thus we have in transcendental identification, the mutuality and reciprocity, the identification and equation of the properties and connected features of the entities that are brought into identification in acts and instances of transcendental identification in consciousness. This then is the principle of reciprocity. Thus it has been said that if I smile at a rose or gaze at a wall, the rose smiles back at me, or the wall gazes back at me. The underlying basis of this, which I will come

to in a moment, is co-presence. The rose-quality vibrating in me is smiling. I am in transcendental affinity, attuned to it, tendentionally vibrating and reciprocally responsive to the rose outside me. This may be illustrated by the well-known phenomenon of butterfly-effects, and equally by the story of the British blackbird. For decades blackbirds (notoriously stupid birds) had co-existed with milk bottles and their characteristic tops. Then one day in the 1930s a blackbird cracked a bottle top, within days other blackbirds had cracked the tops, within a month the whole species knew how to crack the tops. The principles of reciprocity, mediating the basic properties of transcendence and non-duality and the deeper properties of co-presence which underpin them, are vital for understanding the transmission of effects in what is effectively n-dimensionally generalised social space or more generally a re-enchanted reality constituted by emotional, mental and supramental, alongside physical planes of being.

This is also important in overcoming the blind tenacity of our belief in the exhaustive physicality of being; i.e. in the world as completely and only physical. At this level not only do we communicate and equate this level, we communicate and equate the contents (and not just the form) of consciousness, including powers and properties associated with, but not immediately identifiable with the consciousness that they are associated. The most basic principle of reciprocity is possibly the force of love, and later in this book we shall see how love underpins both attraction and repulsion and how the conception of the divine as constituted by love is consistent with a dialectic of centrifugal and centripetal forces.[8]

[8] Understanding the principles of reciprocity also enables us to explain the specificity of karma. For the occasion of the clearing of the hurt which I have done which I carry within me may be provided by you, because the hurt which I carry will bear your mark or vibration within me. So that it may be of necessity or high probability (propensity) that this occasion is provided by you, or a you-like, i.e. someone or some situation like you, though all that is required for the clearing of the karma in principle, is its release, whatever the occasion. But

So far we have seen two levels of implication:

(a) Transcendental identification in consciousness entails the implicitly conscious nature of all being, and
(b) The theory of reciprocity entailing the equivalence of the properties carried within the consciousnesses identified.

We now move on to

(c) This is the theory of co-presence. For transcendental identification in consciousness entails transcendental identification in my consciousness, so that every object in the universe is not only implicitly conscious, and implicitly or explicitly in vibration or attunement or reciprocity with me, but also implicitly enfolded within me. This is generalised co-presence. Note that this does not abolish either (a) physical separateness or difference or (b) externality—since I am enfolded within every object outside me just as much as every object is enfolded within me.

Consideration 6

There are three especially important implications of co-presence which I want to discuss here:

(a) Co-presence explains
    1. Karma
    2. More generally split and unfulfilled intentionality
    3. Not just karma, or more generally split and unfulfilled intentionality, but any heteronomy (at any level of my psychic or mental or emotional or physical being) must be eliminated if we are to become free, that is no longer to be negatively incomplete, i.e. to be self-realised or enlightened.

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the probability that you may provide the occasion is further increased if you have incurred a karma on your part in the situation; so that in a way we are required to clear each other's karma jointly.

(b) It explains the commitment to universal self-realisation, i.e. including a eudaimonistic society. For I cannot be free or fulfilled until all other beings are too. This has two aspects, firstly, objectively their unfreedom constrains the fulfilment of my dharma or essential intentionality, which cannot be completely or fully realised in a world of non-duality. Secondly, as my consciousness of being at the cosmic envelope expands, and since I have lost my ego, that is my sense of being separate from the rest of being, I see my freedom as being indivisibly bound up with the freedom of all other beings whose ground-states are connected to mine on the cosmic envelope.
(c) The mechanism of what I will call the universal silent revolution, which I come to below.

Consideration 7

Every religion thus entails a single path, involving a commitment to individual and universal self-realisation, and involving the equivalence of the principles of the primacy of self-referentiality (whether this be given a Vedic, Egyptian or Platonic declension) and commitment to a eudaimonistic society more generally, to universal self-realisation or the project of theosis. The importance of the principle of self-referentiality is that I can only ever act myself, that is all my action is action on or by myself. But the effects of my action are in principle infinite and I always act so as to maximise the self-realisation of all beings everywhere. Thus we find within Mahayana Buddhism in the ideal of the Bodhisattva, a beautiful rendition of the equivalence of these principles. But similarly within Christian ethics, when the injunction is 'to do unto others only what you would be done by', exactly the same principle is involved (later we shall see that exactly the same commitments are entailed by secular traditions, e.g. Marxism).

However, when we take something such as the golden rule of Christian ethics as formulated above, we need to see that it has to be understood in a non-abstract, non-analytical universal way—that is as presupposing dialectical universality and concrete singularity. Because the ideal must be not that you would not do unto someone else what you would not do unto yourself, but

rather that you would not do unto someone else what if you were them, not you, you would not have done to you. This is an important difference—you do not treat everyone alike, it is unjust and unfair to do so if they are in fact different. Secondly, we have to see that this principle is at odds with the generative couple of the whole discourse of modernity, which turns on egocentricity and abstract universality, linked by instrumental or manipulative means–ends (conditional reasoning). Thirdly, we have to understand the alienation that inevitably stems from being in phases or states of your being inconsistent with your ground-state, and so involving a rupture with the cosmic envelope too. This alienation is of course what marks the period in Christian terms which lies between the epoch of the first judgement (the death of the disciples) and the last judgement (the realisation of the kingdom of heaven on earth)—this phase being the phase that Jesus predicted of alienation and diaspora, albeit possibly initially with only the Jews in mind, but surely characteristic of contemporary times and all peoples everywhere. The outer peace that is lacking in the alienated world of duality can only be restored on the basis of an inner peace and equilibrium in which all heteronomy from the psychic being, ego, mental, emotional and physical beings is shed. Here it is important to appreciate that the basis of the Islamic Jihad is in fact an internal war designed to establish inner peace, not the proselytising activity of forced or unforced conversion; and the story of the *Bhagavad Gita* is essentially not about two warring or opposing clans but about the establishment of peace within the embodied personality on the basis of the winning of the victory of the ground-state over the warring elements of heteronomy which constitute and dominate so much of its embodied personality.

Consideration 8

So we can effect a great unity within the philosophy of comparative religion:

1. There is a unity between transcendent and immanent approaches. For an immanent approach must assume that god overreaches the individual being who seeks self-realisation and so must,

when realised and in the process of achieving that realisation, orient to the realisation of god's entire scope, i.e. the cosmos in which he is embedded. At the same time transcendent approaches need to assume that for man to behave in conformity with the will of a transcendent god outside him he must have implanted within him the condition of possibility of conforming to, i.e. realising, god's will and so becoming god-like in his humanity;

2. But we also effect a reconciliation between absolute and relative approaches. For there is no inconsistency between a belief or commitment to an impersonal, absolute or Brahman, or a personal lord such as Krishna or Jesus. For an absolute must always be realized in some particular way in the domain of relativity including the physical world we inhabit; and in some personalistic way, that is as constituted by personal and more or less finite qualities. Only in this way could the divine be accessed in the sphere of relativity; and only in this way could the divine manifest itself. But this of course does not mean that the divine does not exist in a space beyond its relative personalistic manifestations, e.g. as an impersonal absolute which can be accessed through procedures such as meditation, or as I have argued, a reflection on or absorption in non-duality in everyday life.

3. We can also render consistent ontological realism about god or the divine with epistemological realism, and both with judgemental rationalism (this reflects of course a basic theorem of critical realism); thus one can be an ontological realist about god and believe that he can manifest himself or be accessed or interpreted in a plurality of different traditions, e.g. diverse religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc. and even within one religious tradition in a multiplicity of interpretative traditions or canons, such as within Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, Greek or Russian orthodoxy, but also desert monasticism, gnostic Christianity, etc. And then both are consistent with judgemental rationality too—thus one does not have to underwrite Hindu communalism or Islamic fundamentalism—one can argue that these are inconsistent with the principles or teachings which inform those religions.

Consideration 9

Now the philosophical discourse of modernity replaced the philosophical discourse of religion. Later we will go into the role of the renaissance, the reformation and in particular the rise of the bourgeoisie, capitalism and post-Gallilean science, all of which laid the ground for the rise of the problematic of modernity. The most important moment was the initial Cartesian one. When Descartes pronounced 'I think therefore I am', he prioritised thought over being, man over the rest of the universe, and the 'I', the ego, over others. The logic of the philosophical discourse of modernity reflects perfectly the mode of capitalism which the logic of 'actually existing socialism' did not abolish but merely displaced. It is not difficult to see that the totality of master–slave relations, which are constitutive of the world of duality and alienation in which we live, both occludes and dominates its non-dual basis in everyday life, especially:

> the creativity shown in transcendental emergence;
> the love manifest in transcendental identification; and
> the right-action shown in transcendental agency.

It is not difficult to see that actually in modernity money takes somewhat the place of god, in the sense that it could be called a very low or vulgar form of divinity. Like the divine, it is truly universal, the common currency that binds our social system together, at the same time the circulation and exchange of money actually takes the form of the transcendental identification in consciousness and through the money system of equivalence—it is in fact a form of transcendental identification in consciousness; but also additionally presupposes, as a condition of those overt monetary exchanges, the covert underpinning by the ground-state qualities of love, trust, solidarity, compassion, etc. (not to mention the qualities of creativity, right-action, etc.) which are necessary for its actual functioning. Thus when I ask for a newspaper at a newsagent's and the newsagent hands the paper to me he is naturally and spontaneously trusting that I will in fact give him the money. At a more macroscopic level everyone knows that the banking system would collapse if everyone made their legitimate demands on it.

We have seen the unity of religious emancipatory thought. But secular emancipatory thought in exactly the same way is committed to the co-equal principles of individual and universal self-realisation. This could be shown by an examination of libertarian emancipatory theorists such as Rousseau or Chomsky, or those in the socialist traditions such as Marx. To focus on Marx just for a moment, when he said that a communist society would be one in which the free development of each was a condition of the free development of all, he was presupposing just precisely that jettisoning of ego and of that consistency with the ground-state which would enable me to understand that your flourishing in your own way was as important to me as my own flourishing. What is presupposed here is that we are already constituted as human beings in such a way that we could come to and accept this norm or ideal. Of course to become 'communist man' requires just the shedding that we need to become 'divine or realised man'. In either case we need the shedding which allows the realisation of an embodied personality consistent with its ground-state and so at one with the ground-states of all other beings, including the fellow members of such a communist society. This exercise could be repeated for any number of secular libertarian theories. We can now define the general logic for all emancipatory discourse, a logic implicit in religious and secular traditions, but a logic which we have seen is implicit in any earthly objective too. This logic is as follows:

1. There is a primary or essential level which is good, true, autonomous, etc. and a secondary, emergent or derivative level which is evil, false, illusory, heteronomous and oppressive.

2. The secondary level, nevertheless, in our world dominates or occludes (screens or masks) the primary level on which it nevertheless depends.

3. There is a unilateral (i.e. asymmetric) relation of dependency. The primary level could exist without the secondary level but not the other way around.

4. The process of liberation or emancipation therefore consists in the shedding of the secondary level which results in the expansion (not contraction), development and flourishing of the content of the primary level in an essentially unbounded way.

Consideration 10

We can structure an account around three basic traditions:

1. The Vedic tradition.
2. Thought, the ancient Egyptian tradition and its tributaries.
3. The secular tradition that arose as a result of the displacement of the classical philosophical discourses of religion by the philosophical discourse of modernity. Elsewhere I have described five phases of this tradition. Together these three tendencies within emancipatory thought—the ancient Vedic, the ancient Egyptian, and the non-secular tradition—correspond very roughly to three traditional paths of realisation:

The path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga)
The path of love of devotion (Bhakti Yoga)
The path of action or service (Karma Yoga).

But, for completeness, I must mention a fourth tradition, which may be called the tradition of unspiritual religiosity. The latest phase of this tradition was initiated around 1989–1991 with the resurgence of religious fundamentalism in the wake of the collapse of secular utopian projects, following the demise of actually existing socialism and the apparent complete triumph of western capitalism. To understand religious traditions in general (and although I have only mentioned the classical religions of civilisation that stemmed from the ancient Vedic and ancient Egyptian traditions, in a full treatment it is essential to consider pre-civilised traditions, which are still efficacious today), we have to understand religious traditions as being TINA formations, with complex determinations, some strengthening human autonomy and others opposing it. Thus a religious tradition may well provide resources for the self, ranging from philosophical literature to practices of worship to techniques of meditation and so on. At the same time it may embody interpretative ideologies and organisational regimes totally opposed to human self-realisation and emancipation, functioning as oppressive ideologies and organisations.

Consideration 11

I have outlined above the logic of emancipatory discourse. This entails:

the shedding of all elements of heteronomy within the psychic being;
the shedding of the ego or the sense of separateness from the rest of being;
the clearing of mind;
the clearing of emotional turbulence, including the shedding of emotions and attachments; and
the refinement of the physical and energetic body, including the jettisoning of the belief, the 'blindly tenacious' belief in the exhaustive physicality of our being.

Consideration 12

We have thus come to a remarkable conclusion:
whatever objective you want;
whatever religious tradition you subscribe to;
whatever emancipatory tradition you identify with;
whatever practice you engage in;
whatever community or belief or sensibility or location you belong to

They all point to a single path.

This path is powered by the norm of clarity which amounts to coherence, purity, single-pointedness. And leads to an understanding of the necessity for self-realisation, that is the elimination of one's negative incompleteness, in the five-fold sense defined above; and its entailment of and indivisibility with the self-realisation of all beings everywhere, at the very least as a condition of the fulfilment of one's own dharmic intentionality, that is the intentionality of one's ground-state, but more especially because being consistent with one's ground-state, one will see its inexorable connectivity with the ground-states of all other beings, which one will experience as equally one's own. For the secret condition of the whole process is the enfolding or co-

presence of the totality, the entire universe within yourself, so that its freedom, that is the realisation of all is a condition of your own. It is not that there are the starry heavens above and the moral law within, as Kant would have it; rather, the true basis of your virtuous existence is the fact that the starry heavens are within you, and you are within them.

Consideration 13

Self-realisation or enlightenment depends then on the shedding of all the elements within the embodied personality (and also the psychic being) inconsistent with your ground-state. And this shedding results in the expansion and flourishing of your ground-state in your embodied personality. The mechanics of the universal revolution necessitated now in our unique situation—unique in the sense that for the first time, in our known history, is the self-realisation of all beings, or at least a huge move in that direction, a condition for the survival of our species, that is of the human race. The clearing of the psychic being is the shedding of all the karma stemming from the residues from split and unfulfilled intentionality of the past. The clearing of the embodied personality is the elimination of ego, the clarity of mind, the purity of heart and the bodily balance necessary for right-action. How does this process of self- and universal self-realisation come about?

1. The first effect of self-realisation is spontaneously right and maximally efficacious or coherent action, even if due to the dual nature of the world in which the action occurs, the unfreedom of the other beings that constitute the field of your action, your intentionality is not fulfilled, it will still be the best thing to do and oriented in that direction. This is the overt, outward effect.

2. But there is also an inward, esoteric effect.

(a) For your action, operating at the level of *reciprocity* will attract or stimulate a response by all beings similarly situated; but also, when we n-dimensionally generalise, i.e. re-enchant, our conception of being, we will understand that even if they are not in a position to act in a reciprocal or reinforcing way, your action will be noticed as illustrating a possi-

bility which can be actualised by like beings, whether or not they do so. For perception and cognition as well as causality occur on sui generis mental, emotional and (as far as we know) other planes.

(b) The esoteric effect also operates at the level of *co-presence*. For in performing an act, I evoke in my act an echo in all beings similarly situated who are co-present in me and in virtue of my act, I evoke it in them. *Ceteris paribus* this will tendentionally affect all beings dialectically similar to me. Notice that in the definition of their dialectical circumstances, we must include their proximity or distance from their ground-state, so that merely by moving in the direction of my ground-state I evoke an echo in all dialectically similar beings to move in the direction of their ground-states too, and tendentionally they will do so. Sooner or later, everyone will understand that the only formula or recipe for success in life is one in which they flourish in consistency with their ground-state. And as they clear the residues of their psychic being and the heteronomous elements within their embodied personality of matter inconsistent with their ground-state, moving closer to the cosmic envelope, they will move closer to the space from which created loving, creative, intelligent and successful right-action springs. The gap between the right and the successful will be bridged as more beings tend to move to the space of the transcendent. In a way which no finite intelligence can plan, changes, if they are going to, will occur, just at the time that they are needed most. And I have argued that this time is now: with chronic alienation at all four planes of social being accentuated by ecological crisis, we approach a point at which we can cut the ties of the oppressive systems which bind us externally, and which we have internalised, at the moment of self and universal realisation, the moment for which mankind has pined, at that moment we will be able to say that pre-history has ended, and the real living, the real enjoyment of a physically embodied existence will begin.

I have essentially above been rehearsing the dialectic of the

dive to the ground-state. But earlier I have talked about the dialectic of the chase, a dialectic which is oriented to the elimination of heteronomy, rather than the strengthening of autonomy. But the two dialectics complement each other. The dialectic of the chase depends upon the efficacy of pure observation or attention without judgement, thought, emotional turbulence, distraction, etc. This pure attention is of course already a non-dual state. And it is at its most effective only when it occurs from the level of a being's ground-state. Moreover it takes the form of the third modality of non-duality, in which we go into the deep interior of the heteronomous element we are engaging. It thus unites all three modalities of non-duality. Going into the deep interior of the heteronomous element we will trace it back to the ground-state it is parasitic upon, disconnecting or dissolving it or allowing its reabsorption within the cosmic binding force of love. No action is more effective than single-pointed action from the ground-state, no action is stronger than that which expresses the binding power of love, no action is more powerful than silent awareness or pure perception. Thus we have the paradox that to fight your enemy most effectively you need to surrender to yourself, in Sufi terms, the to yourself and then you will fight with the cosmic power of the universe.

This takes us nicely into the topic of the next section.

Section 6: The Metacritique of Marx's Critique of Hegelian Dialectic

Marx engaged a triple critique of the Hegelian dialectic. The first element of this turned on Hegel's 'philosophy of identity'. In this critique, Marx pinpointed what I came to call the epistemic fallacy. And this is associated with a form of Marxian materialism which can be called epistemological materialism. The second moment of his critique turned on what I have called Hegel's speculative illusion, that is the way in which he made the whole of history appear to be the product of the demiurge of the idea, a kind of conceptual unravelling. And this is associated with a form of materialism which can be called ontological materialism, which grounds mind and products of ideas as properties of materially

embodied beings. The third aspect of Marx's critique isolates what I came to call the fallacy of ontological monovalence, this is roughly Hegel's endism and pinpoints here the way in which Marx is committed to what I would call a practical materialism, the logic of which I have tried to elaborate in my transformational model of social activity.

What I want to do here is to look at the extent to which Marx himself is susceptible to a metacritique of his own critique of Hegelian dialectic. I am doing this not out of any lack of sympathy with Marx's project or affinity with Hegel's; but rather because I believe that it is essential for us to bring out the spiritual presuppositions of emancipatory projects, such as Marxism, and at the same time show the transformative implications of spirituality. At the end of the day I want to say that you cannot be a truly spiritual being unless you are committed to the overthrow of capitalism; and that you cannot be committed to the overthrow of capitalism unless you understand the implications of Marx's third thesis of Feuerbach—that you must, as an educator educate, that is transform yourself (or you will just be projecting your own problems onto that of society; or even worse displacing an existing set of master–slave relationships)—and of his vision of a society in which the free development of each would be a condition of the free development of all. No one could argue that there was any serious attempt within the Soviet bloc to realise these ideals or that vision. No more were the immediate producers in control of the labour process under actually existing socialism than they are under capitalism today. And this was the ultimate root cause of the demise of the Soviet bloc. For it did very well while it was importing a technology from the west, and in the 1960s it looked as if it was going to overtake it. But in the west there are paid innovators and creativity is given a monetary reward. It was just presupposed, taken for granted in the Soviet Union and atrophied, as did the other values of what I called the ground-state. There was no source of innovation, no dynamism intrinsic to the Soviet economy itself; so that ultimately, the Soviet bloc fighting on the ideological terrain of capitalism and mimicking its structures of power and oppression, transparently failed to compete effectively with capitalism on capitalism's own ground.

It was therefore no surprise when the pretence that it was embodying a higher social order was exposed. In the way in which always happens in history, revolutions occur spontaneously and silently and pretty universally. We can go into this on another occasion; my concern here is to identify how it is that Marx himself provided, contrary to his best intentions, some degree of licence for the failings of Marxism so to speak in practice.

Certainly you can say that considering the first line of Marx's critique of Hegel, that there are actualist and unilinear tendencies within Marxism itself. It was perhaps no accident that no less a figure than Gramsci called the 1917 revolution 'a revolution against Marx's *Capital*'. Turning to Marx's critique of the ontological monovalence, the transformational model of social activity was never developed into a form adequate to an understanding of what I have called four-planar social being. Combining these two weaknesses the idea was that taking the Soviet bloc out of the structures of capitalism at the level of the economy, at the level of economic management and control, would automatically usher in a better form of society. And the inadequate theorisation of social being in its four-planar and total complexity and the lack of understanding of the dialectical, intra-dependent and open nature of a social systems, as well as the failure to transfer power to the level of the creative compassionate and right-acting agents who kept the whole social system going, must bear a large degree of responsibility for the failure of this experiment; and certainly you can find in Marx's work no lack of statements which suggest actualist, mechanistic and simplistic social transformation.[9] However it is when we turn to his critique of the speculative illusion, that the problems become greater. For Marx routinely expresses a commitment to materialism. So we have to ask what exactly does this mean. If it means the priority of the economy, or the technology it embodies, then we have to understand that technology is the objectification of human agency, of human ideas. Marx him-

[9] It should be stressed that what I am doing here is not so much criticising Marx, who initiated a research programme, but the practice of subsequent Marxists who failed to follow through the work that he did on necessary limited terrain.

self said that human agency was founded on a double freedom: a freedom from instinctual determination, and a freedom to act in a planned, pre-meditated way. In other words what distinguishes human agency from purely mechanical or instinctual behaviour is precisely its intentional, i.e. its ideational element. And how can one make sense, not only of technology, but at the centrality of an idea like class consciousness, or the role that Marxism as an emancipatory ideology or theory can play for the working class or other suppressed peoples, without understanding the role of ideas in history and in contemporary society as well. Never have we seen a social form than the one we currently inhabit, which has been so soiled by the malign abuse of ideas, and indeed malign ideas themselves. Everything that we do and all the damage that we have done on all four planes of social being has sprung from or been ratified by ideas. We cannot explain them mechanically or biologically. Failure to understand this is absolutely criminal, given Marxism's aspiration to be, as surely it can be, suitably recontextualised, an emancipatory force in the world. Indeed one cannot even take into account the nature let alone efficacy in history of Marxism unless one sees that Marxism is a body of ideas, which does successfully capture a deep, perhaps the deepest dual level, in our social structure;[10] and which, as such, precisely in virtue of the causal efficacy of ideas, can be causally efficacious in social change.

Sometimes materialism is given an emphasis not so much in terms of matter but in terms of social structure. But what keeps the social structure going is precisely the agents who reproduce or transform it, these are the living forces which embody it and unfortunately internalise it. For capitalist commodification would be impossible without the desires it inculcates in us—to put it

[10] Albeit one which presupposes, and depends on the efficacy of a deeper, untheorised level, that of the ground-state qualities of unrecognised (non-commodified) creativity and unconditional love and other ground-state qualities that Marx did not theorise, just as his vision of a communist society actually depends on the process of self-realisation or enlightenment and its universalisation that the individual process both implies and presupposes for its completion.

bluntly the greed to have more cars, for instance—than could possibly be justified in terms of our needs, let alone ecological grounds. At the same time it plays on our other negative emotions and indeed stimulates them, fear of a loss of job, pride in one's social station, etc.

I have argued elsewhere that what you need to do is to trace any source of heteronomy back to its ground-state, that bit of the cosmic envelope that it feeds on. For what ultimately sustains any social system is the energy, the love, the creativity of the agents employed. Now that does not mean that the heteronomy and the evil and the oppression is not there, but that they only survive, i.e. are reproduced or transformed, subsist, in virtue of its non-dual actions and manifestation of ground-state qualities of beings. I have isolated the mechanisms of the dive to the ground-state and the trace or chase which it enables, whereby heteronomies can be disconnected from the energy of the ground-state and the cosmic envelope. These are the prerequisites for what I have called a 'universal silent revolution'. Once you disconnect a source of heteronomy from its energy, from its supply lines, then it is left as a reified residue. Of course you need to clear away its material residues, so the cities and the pollution that capitalism has left us will need to be cleared, everything will need to be cleaned up. But it will no longer be a living system when it is disconnected from its roots in the ground-state of beings situated on the cosmic envelope.

Section 7: MetaReality, Critical Realism and Modernity

The critique of critical realism by the philosophy of metaReality turns on the fact that critical realism is still largely a philosophy of duality, in the sense that its central foundational categories are of non-identity, or presuppose non-identity; whereas the philosophy of metaReality is a philosophy which very boldly and confidently asserts the primacy of identity, identification, unification and non-duality over duality and non-identity. Secondly, the philosophy of metaReality while sustaining the emphasis introduced by critical realism on ontology, namely thinking being, adds two further levels of ontology to:

thinking being;
thinking being processually;
thinking being as a whole or a totality;
thinking being in terms of transformative agency and reflexivity or the unity of theory and
practice; and thinking being as incorporating a spiritual element or a dimension. In addition to all these elements, the philosophy of metaReality understands two further levels of being:

thinking being as enchanted (that is as immediately meaningful, evaluative, etc.); and
thinking being as non-dual.

Understanding these two further dimensions of ontology radically refashions our way of interpreting the previous five.

Thus thinking being as enchanted (6R) means that we have to n-dimensionally generalise social being. For we immediately, directly understand each other and the natural world, immediately and directly communicate without physical mediation. Thus when I speak to you, you immediately understand me. Even if you do not understand me you immediately hear me, even if you do not hear me you immediately pick up a noise. This means we must take seriously direct mind-to-mind and feeling-to-feeling causality and action. So we need the idea of two ways in which one mind can affect another mind, directly; and indirectly, e.g. through the mediation of a letter. So we are here dealing with a level of the emergence of mind from matter, the physical realm, which hitherto existing critical realism, like other philosophies, had not clearly identified and gauged. So phenomena such as ideologies have to be located as sui generis realities operating according to their own relatively independent dynamics irreducible to their physical manifestations and embodiments.

Understanding the seventh level of ontology (7Z/A) which the philosophy of metaReality situates is an even greater significance, in fact it underpins the rest. The non-dual sustains the totality of the structures and the forms in the relative world of duality (including the dualistic demi-real world of illusion which

dominates it) which critical realism has described. What are the main modalities in terms of which non-duality sustains the world of duality. Firstly it provides its basis or ground, this is at the level of what I have called the ground-state and cosmic envelope, these levels of human being, and being generally, sustain all the rest. All the other levels of being are unilaterally dependent on it and those other levels of being are correspondingly emergent from it. (Once more we can see here as at the level of the sixth deepening of ontology, the role of emergence within stratified ontology plays a key role. Emergence here presupposes ingredience and immanence as well as the existence of sui generis properties at the higher-order level, so the ingredient or ultimate or more basic level does not exhaust the higher-order level, nor does the higher-order level exhaust or saturate the more basic one.) So the first element of non-duality is that of basis or ground. The second element is that of mode of constitution. Thus our social life is constituted by transcendental identification in consciousness and transcendental agency. That is human being and activity always presupposes a spontaneous or basic transcendental moment. Transcendental identification in consciousness and transcendental agency are absolutely irreducible features of any understanding and any action in the human world; just as, to revert to the first modality, everything mediated by ideas, emotions and objectified in action presupposes the ground-state qualities of creativity, love and a capacity for right-action. The third modality in terms of which non-duality sustains the world of duality, including its dualistic demi-real, alienated dominant forms, is that in which the non-dual provides the deep fine interior structure, so to speak, of any moment of consciousness or being. This can be shown by a phenomenological examination of the fine qualities of any moment of attention or focus which will eventually yield a state similar to that described by the ancient Vedic's as *sat-chit-anand*, which I loosely paraphrase as the bliss-consciousness of being. So in all these three ways non-duality is primary and sustains the world of duality.

There are three main mechanisms in terms of which the world of non-duality functions. These are transcendence and in particular transcendental identification; reciprocity; and co-presence. To deal with co-presence first, this involves the enfolding,

within any element of being constituted at its ground-state level, of all other elements of being. The mechanism of reciprocity involves the mutuality involved in exchanges between beings located or rooted in the ground-state. Its ultimate basis lies in the co-presence of the totality within any one element of being, but it is most immediately and obviously identifiable in acts of transcendental identification. When you watch television and you follow a play you are immediately at one with the play, there is no duality involved. Similarly when I talk to you or when I am engulfed by the beauty of a landscape I am immediately one with you or the landscape; but in the same way when I understand a threatening act, I immediately identify its threat. This involves an exchange or reciprocity not just of a pure state of consciousness, but of the qualities of that state. In virtue of my capacity to transcendentally identify with beings who are not explicitly conscious, we have to impute consciousness, implicit consciousness to all beings. Because I can identify with music or a landscape or a stone or a flower, we must say that those things are implicitly conscious. Insofar as everything can be identified, in consciousness, as implied by the fact that we all are constituents, inhabitants of a single universe, bound by the same cosmic envelope, we must say that everything is implicitly conscious and everything is implicitly, that is to say, at least potentially, implicitly in my conscious, and therefore everything is enfolded within me. And when I engage in some act, then that which I act on I also partake of which is the basis of reciprocity.

So these extraordinary features of the non-dual realm necessitate our recasting everything we have previously thought about the realm of duality. It is just worth mentioning here that when I use the term co-presence to describe the enfolding of other beings within my being, then I am using it in a distinct sense from that in which I have talked about the co-presence of heteronomy and autonomy, or non-duality and duality. Of course the aim, recast in the light of the sixth and seventh levels of the deepening of ontology, remains that of shedding the elements of heteronomy and qualities inconsistent with our ground-state from our being, that is a dialectic of disemergence which is to get rid of the heteronomous which is co-present within us. But in the case of the level

described by the philosophy of metaReality, this involves the shedding not only from my embodied personality and all the other embodied personalities my embodied personality interacts with, but also those heteronomies which have so to speak gained an autonomous life of their own. In the case of such autonomous entities, forces, systems, social structures what we need to do is disconnect, defuse them from their source in the ground-state of beings located on the cosmic envelope. And then clear their husks or residues.

Thus when we trace the heteronomy or locate its source then the move is to disconnect it from its source, to cut off its supply lines. So when I am clear and at one with my ground-state then I am not feeding capitalism though I may still be engaged in exchanges with it. And this pinpoints the sense in which the whole of the cosmos has to be clear and all beings within it realised, for so long as there are things external to me which impinge or impose on my own freedom then I cannot be free. This point can be deepened by realising that actually the unfreedom of other beings is part of me, they are part of me and if they are unfree then there is a part of me, albeit at a deep level, which is unfree too. And so any commitment to self-realisation implies both at a pragmatic and external level and at a transcendental and internal level the goal of universal self-realisation—that is a commitment to transformation at all planes of social being, including those planes thematised by the re-enchantment of ontology levels of being.

Extraordinarily enough, the goal of universal self-realisation can be shown to be implicit in secular as well as religious emancipatory projects: the level of the non-dual, the transcendental, the spiritual is always tacitly presupposed. Even more extraordinary is the fact that in anything we do, we will find ourselves set on a dialectic, albeit one which may have many twists and turns which will ultimately, inevitably, take us back to a position of consistency with our ground-state. The aim is to allow our embodied personalities to grow and flourish in the relative world of duality. There is within this world of duality the realm of demi-reality, this is the realm which dominates the relative world, an illusory but causally efficacious world of duality and split, alienation leading to global crisis at all planes of social being. The first thing is obviously to get rid of the demi-real, but these illusions are very

deep and they are intrinsic to most of our embodied personalities, comprising for instance a sense of ego or separateness from the rest of creation, all kinds of fixed prejudices and beliefs at the level of our mind, all kinds of negative emotions at the level of feeling and so on. So the project is by no means a simple one, but the end state must be, eventually, sooner or later, achieved. For there is a relationship of uni-lateral dependency of heteronomy upon autonomy, of what is inconsistent with our ground-states upon our ground-states and its qualities.

Particularly important is the sense of separateness from the rest of being that the egocentricity of our world encourages. This is central to the problematic of modernity. For this problematic constituted around the beginning of the 17th century (though its main features have roots which are far older than that) is essentially one in which atomistic individuals are set off against each other, so that we have a war of all against all, and the origins of a society, gesellscaft rather than gemeinschaft society and set off against the rest of being, which is treated in a manipulative way. The individual subject thus treats other human beings, other subjects, other beings generally instrumentally and nature instrumentally, whether this takes the form of conditional and contractual exchanges or whether it takes the form of ruthless exploitation. The really important thing to appreciate is that all these modes of instrumental reasoning and all the systems that they inform are ultimately underpinned by non-dual acts and moments of identification, the qualities of the ground-state and that deep interior which I have referred to earlier, that is the three modalities of non-duality.

Thus underpinning a monetary exchange is always a level of mutuality or trust; underpinning the regimentation of the factory production line is the creative ingenuity of the immediate producers to keep the production line going; underpinning the reproduction of human being's, 'labour power' is the unconditional and spontaneous, holistic and intuitive nature of most domestic labour. Nowhere will you find a human act or situation which does not embody or depend on or utilise human energy and intelligence, creativity, love, right-action and capacity for fulfilment of intentionality. Nowhere will you find a human situation which does not depend on transcendental consciousness,

ingredient in all other states of consciousness, transcendental identification with other beings or situations, whether in perception or in social interaction (in discourse for example). Nowhere will you find a human act or activity which is not informed by transcendental agency, basic spontaneous acts. Nowhere will you find a situation which is not kept going by a capacity for right-action or the fulfilment of intentionality in the world.

It is a little bit more difficult to immediately identify the workings of the third modality of non-duality, what I referred to as the fine structure or deep interior of being. But a moment's reflection shows that the creative impulse comes always from the space or gap between thoughts, the love filters through as it were our existing emotional constitution, the spontaneous act comes from nowhere. So this deep interior is also an englobing bound which presses in whenever our consciousness whether at the mental, emotional or physical levels lets it. In other words this deep interior is present everywhere, and all we have to do is let it be.

The non-dual realm then in these three ways sustains the rest. So what then are the prospects of human emancipation? This has a double twist to it now, on the one hand of self-realisation and on the other of actual human survival. The realm of duality always contains the possibility of dualism. Dualism is or has been a chapter in human history that has involved a war between two conflicting interpretations or interests in the realm of the dual, normally both illusory (or demi-real). For the first time in the history of duality, there are not two conflicting systems, just one, which event happened as late as 1989–1991 with the collapse of the at least formal alternative to capitalism provided by the Soviet bloc. Now there is a single system of alienation, reification and commodification, dominated by the money form, together with all its cultural and symbolic manifestations. We are living in a world which is no longer dominated by a dual logic, a logic of opposition on the terrain of duality and demi-reality. On the terrain of duality (and demi-reality) there is a single logic, a single system, a monologic.

Thus for the first time the opposition is between duality and non-duality, not between two competing forms of non-duality. So the war is between war and peace, the struggle is between

autonomy and heteronomy; not between two forms of heteronomy. The only alternative to the existing system is the realisation and flowering of its no-dual basis or grounds. We should be encouraged by the thought that we already embody, in potential, everything that we need to realise all our dreams; all we have to do is to shed or eliminate everything which is inconsistent with that, but never has the target been so clear, never have the lines been so sharply drawn, and never have the stakes been so high, since the very survival of our physical environment is at stake.

What we can say is that neither the victory of duality over non-duality nor the co-existence of the two is feasible. If the world of duality or the systems of heteronomy were to eliminate non-duality and the autonomies on which they are founded they would immediately collapse. In the same way if they destroyed the physical basis of our embodied being, this would not be a victory as far as they were concerned. This need not be the end of the existence of non-dual and enchanted beings, or beings with minds and feelings, since there is no reason to suppose that those minds and feelings, necessarily emergent from their bodily basis, could not survive without that basis.

But the only tenable and sustainable solution, if the species, and its host planet, earth, is to survive, is one in which the realm of dualism is rolled back and no longer dominates and occludes its non-dual grounds. In this process ideas, including specially the ideas put forward first by critical realism and now much more radically deepened by the philosophy of metaReality, can play a crucial role. In fact only ideas and only individual initiative and only the initiative all agents can roll them back. This task is made easier by the realisation that everything that we do in life is dependent on that non-dual basis, mode of constitution and deep interior, which is currently being drained; and the way in which it is being drained is also sustained (recursively) by non-duality. So all we have to do is recognise the power that we already have and refuse to yield it any more to the reified systems which feed off and drain it. The task is up to us.

About the Author

Ram Roy Bhaskar was born in London of an Indian father and an English mother, studied at the University of Oxford and has taught in universities throughout the world. He is the author of many highly acclaimed books including *A Realist Theory of Science, The Possibility of Naturalism, Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation, Reclaiming Reality, Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom, Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom, Plato Etc* and *From East to West*. He was instrumental in establishing the Centre for Critical Realism and its sister organisation, the International Association of Critical Realism; and is now engaged in worldwide work oriented to the project of universal self-realisation.

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